SAINT PAUL

BY ÉMILE BAUMANN

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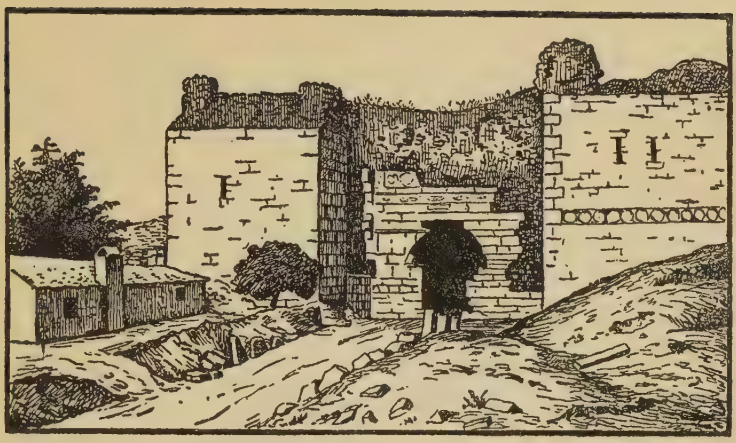

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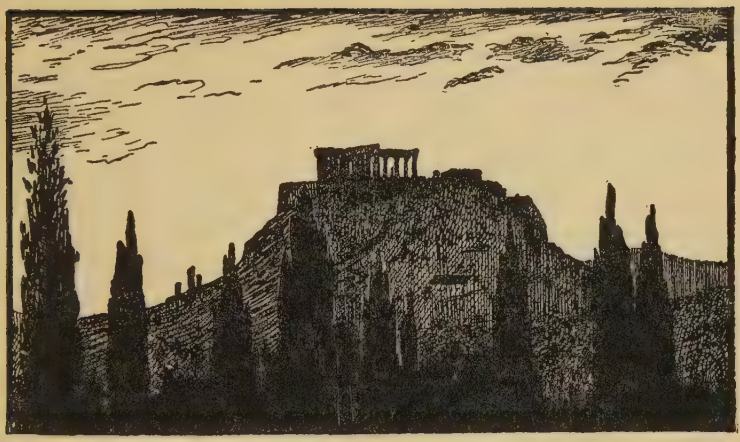

PREFACE

ONE of the greatest voices the world has ever heard was his.

He was the dominating figure of the apostolic age.

If we sought in his history purely the destiny of a man, it would seem prodigious. This young Pharisee who, moved by his zeal for the Law to attempt the extermination of an impious sect, abruptly made himself the uncompromising apostle of the despised doctrine; this Jew who involuntarily became an enemy of the Jews, would astonish us by presenting the exceptional case of a soul turning as though at a single bound, to go in a direction which it had forbade to others. Imagine that Saint-Just, while signing his lists of suspects, had suddenly been won over to their views. Such, though even more unusual, was the conversion of Saul the persecutor.

And for thirty years after this transformation, his life was a sublime and terrible adventure.

With two or three companions, or a small body-guard,

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and at times alone, he travelled roads beset by brigands, through the pagan or barbarian provinces, earning his livelihood in the towns as a weaver, like the workmen I have seen at Tarsus weaving goat hair for the tents of the nomads.

Everywhere he announced a new God, the Messiah of the prophets, the Son of God, Redeemer, Lord, Judge of the living and the dead; but this God was none other than a Nazarene vagabond, the blasphemer and rebel who had been nailed to a gibbet in Jerusalem and whom his disciples claimed to have risen from the dead. Paul believed in him because he had *seen* him, and had heard him speak. And this vision which had flung him to the ground and scorched his eyes, leaving him in total blindness for three days, remained as vivid in his memory as if the glory of Christ had continued to flash before him and as if the voice were still thundering in his ears.

In the synagogues he preached Christ to his brethren the Jews. Some believed in his revelation; the majority were distrustful, cried out against him, stirred up the populace, plotted to kill him. He "shook off the dust of his feet against them," and turned towards the pagans who were willing to believe.

From Antioch of Syria to Cyprus, from Cyprus to Antioch of Pisidia, to Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe; then from Cilicia into Troas, Macedonia, Thessaly, Attica, and Achaea; and then from Corinth to Ephesus, he founded churches, sowing the gospel of promise. Like a storm flashing across the sky from east to west, his words flew from people to people, departing and returning.

His field of action, as he proclaims with some hyper-

bole in his Epistle to the Romans, extended "from Jerusalem, and round about even unto Illyricum. . . . But now, having no more any place in these regions,[1] and having these many years a longing to come unto you, whensoever I go unto Spain (for I hope to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first in some measure I shall have been satisfied with your company)."

Whensoever I go into Spain! The scope of his ambitions was hardly restricted by the limits of the Roman world. He was enormously impatient to see that Christ, who was yesterday without name, should be worshipped everywhere. He wanted his Lord to be known even to the ends of the earth. Thus, with all the nations knowing that the Lord had come, the fulness of the times would soon be at hand; at an hour which no one could foretell, the Judge would descend from heaven, and Christ would reign throughout eternity.

The account in the Acts, and Paul's own testimony, can help us to imagine at what price he made these superhuman conquests:

"Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day have I been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of robbers, in perils from my countrymen, in perils from the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in labour and travail, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. Besides those things that are without, there

[1] He meant that he had founded all the churches which it was his task to found.

is that which presseth upon me daily, anxiety for all churches."

From nearly every city which he visited, he was driven out—to reappear, intrepid. His struggles made him stronger. Nevertheless, after the uproar at Ephesus and the little-known events that followed it, he confessed "that we were weighted down exceedingly, beyond our power, insomuch as we despaired even of life."

On the last journey to Jerusalem in the year 56, he was dragged from the temple and in the absence of the Romans was beaten by the populace. He remained for two years in chains at Caesarea, finally appealing to Caesar in order to avoid falling into the clutches of the Jews. He was put on board ship for Rome. A terrific tempest which lasted fourteen days drove him safe and sound to the coast of Malta. He reached Rome; his captivity was prolonged for two years more—a fruitful period during which he taught and made converts.

Next he dropped into obscurity. Certain passages in the Epistle to Timothy give us cause to suppose that when he was freed he went back to Asia, returning again to Rome and being again incarcerated. All tradition agrees in situating his martyrdom there, as is furthermore attested by five different texts, the oldest of which, the epistle of Clement the Roman written between 92 and 101, pays him this solemn tribute:

"Seven times weighted down with chains; banished, stoned; a herald of the faith in the East and in the West, he has received great glory. He taught the ways of righteousness to the whole world, he reached the farthest confines of the West, and having completed his martyrdom in the presence of those who govern, he has left

this world and gone to the holy place, an illustrious model of patience."

When viewed from without, when drawn in its rough outlines, the career of Saint Paul reveals capacities for belief and persuasiveness which make him the *typical apostle.*

Though no man is strictly indispensable, certain persons are unique. No one else could do their work so thoroughly as they. The battle of Austerlitz would hardly have been much of a victory for any one other than Napoleon.

It is not for us to decide who was the greatest among the disciples of Jesus. Peter was privileged to possess a simple and incomparable goodness. Paul was never to pronounce a sentence like his:

"Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee."

Or like his words to the lame man in the Temple, before healing him:

"Silver and gold have I none; but what I have, that I give thee."

This unlearned man who had become capable of commanding and dogmatizing, this timid figure who bore himself with splendid pride before the chief priests, arrests us like some miracle more astounding than any he performed.

The physiognomy of Cephas, despite everything, is reduced to a few elementary lines. His speeches and his two epistles acquaint us with his doctrine and his triumphs. Of Cephas himself we know too little.

John remains somehow veiled in the dignity of a divine flame. He is the organ of the Seraphim; one hears the tones while the player remains invisible.

Stephen was the precursor of Paul; he had the silhouette of a seer, the "face of an angel" upon which fell the splendour from on high. He was the first after Jesus to dare trouble Israel's delusive belief in the everlastingness of the Temple. But he had to vanish in order that Saul, his assassin, might take up his audacities in turn and carry on his efforts to their conclusion. We have glimpses of Barnabas as a companion and a man of strength. M. Loisy would magnify him at the expense of Paul, just as Michelet robbed Condé of credit for the victory at Rocroi in order to bestow it upon Sirot. These are the fictions of bad romantics who are impatient with the traditional statues. If Barnabas did admirable things, his work has become merged in the common efforts; and if he wrote, nothing survives.[2]

Paul, on the contrary, is preciously familiar to us. Though certain episodes in his life remain obscure, we approach him much as we should if we had lived with him; and the more we follow him, the more we feel the beauty of his mind, the vigour of his *genius*.

For we must restore its religious values to this word which is so generally profaned. All the apostles possessed the Holy Ghost; but according to the Thomist axiom, gifts bear fruit *ad modum recipientis*, in proportion to the abilities of the receiver.

Paul was not called a "chosen vessel" without reason. For the purposes of his mission he had received from God marvellous faculties which were purified and made sublime by grace.

His character was an exceptional combination of two elements: an abundant nervous energy, always ready for extreme decisions; and the boldest, the most flexible

[2] Unless the Epistle to the Hebrews was drafted by him.

intelligence, an ability to judge people at a single glance, to assimilate the most foreign influences, to be as much at home among ideas as some keen-minded Greek.

But though he was born in the hellenized city of Tarsus, though he spoke Greek as readily as Aramaic, and though pagan principles were engrafted upon his formation as a Jew, Jewish blood predominated in him. It was his boast to call himself a Jew. His dialectic reveals rabbinic training; his morality retains the imprint of Jewish concepts. His fanaticism as a persecutor is specifically Jewish; and similarly with his realistic turn of mind, his ability as an organizer. From his youth, religious passion coloured all his activities. He lived, he tells us, for the Law, with his eyes fixed upon the Temple, in the messianic hope that Israel would triumph and its humiliation be avenged as promised in the scriptures.

The Law sufficed for him, he would have none of the Pharisaic narrowness; his only knowledge of Christ was to abhor him. Did he suspect the secret call of a Power that would change all?

The wonder is that he plunged headlong into the faith which had overturned his own. He never faltered, but pressed on like the mysterious animals seen by the prophet, which went forward without turning and with their wings extended.

The sheer strength and cunning of his enthusiasm were enough to break through the ramparts of the old Law at that very point where the cornerstone should have been inserted, to open wide the gates of the Holy Place to all the nations.

Yet his break with the Law overwhelmed him and lacerated him. His pain finally became incessant at seeing Israel turn its back upon the call to salvation.

Wherein did Paul remain a Jew? Wherein did he cease to be one? Historically, the problem deserves exhaustive examination. The intimate tragedy of his conversion would in itself suffice to fill this book.

But, I hasten to declare, a psychologist's curiosity did not inspire the present undertaking.

At first I knew Saint Paul in fragments, through the simple epistles of the liturgy. The contact became closer around the age of twenty-six, when I was laying the foundation of my work. Could I say what all I owed him, what all I owe him still? There is no mystery which we cannot penetrate by following him, "with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord." Predestination; contraries creating contraries; the depth of the Fall implying the magnificence of the Redemption; the Communion of the Saints—all these immensities are explored by Paul as extensively as is possible to a human mind enlightened by the Word. The poise of his views equals their sublimity.

The leaps in thought, the obscure transitions, the abrupt ellipses do not matter. Going beyond these obstacles, we find supreme clearness, blasting vehemence, limpidity, unction, good-fellowship.

He wrote to the Corinthians: "As unto babes in Christ, I fed you with milk."

Indeed, when we imbibe the doctrine of life through his verses, it does assume the savour of new milk mixed with the bitter perfume of the growing grass. This "open air" Christianity seems fanned by the breezes of the large ports at which the Apostle disembarked. He brings us the ingenuousness of the faith, the gift of hope

but is it the hypothesis of an historian? What does he make of the profound simplicity and earnestness of the holy book?

Like his German masters, M. Loisy lives with a spectre which obsesses him: interpolation. When one story remotely resembles another he cries that they are doubles. As though the profoundest of realities were not a continual rebeginning!

I certainly would not conclude, however, that the work of these negative exegetists has been fruitless. In aiming to ruin the authority of the New Testament, they have enriched our knowledge of environment, made our understanding of influences subtler, and elucidated similarities in doctrine. They have unintentionally been of assistance to orthodox exegesis. Without them we should never have had such monumental works as the *Théologie de Saint Paul* by P. Prat, or the *Messianisme Chez les Juifs* by P. Lagrange, or Lagrange's commentaries on the Epistle to the Romans and the Epistle to the Galatians.

But this self-complacent school of criticism suffers under an ailment from which it has no desire to be cured: it dissociates and dissects, but it does not construct. At its hands, the pronounced unity of Paul's character falls into disintegration. He becomes a mere syncretist, skilfully or unconsciously assembling mystic elements borrowed from the Stoics, the mysteries, and the cult of Mithra, from whatever theosophies and gnostic systems he chanced upon. His Christianity is made to seem like a casual mushroom which sprang out of the decadent soil of ancient religions.

It is too easy to compare pagan mysticism with that of Saint Paul, and to confuse the two by stressing

analogies in expression or ritual. Such equivocation obscures their fundamental contrasts.

Besides, we must remember that a man is not led by ideas. To understand him one must find the core of his volition, never losing sight of his race and temperament, and his social background. The need for considering such details is even more imperative when writing the history of a Jew. Juster has shown how widely the Jews of the Diaspora were scattered throughout the Roman Empire, always jealously maintaining their separatist tendencies, isolating themselves in their ghettos, faithful to their common traditions.

Philo recognized that the Israelites were ready "to die rather than permit a single ancient custom to be altered." For they felt certain that the changing of some usage would be like the removal of a stone from an edifice which, "though appearing to retain its firmness, would weaken little by little and finally fall into ruins."

Besides their synagogues, they maintained their own schools, libraries, tribunals, and cemeteries. If they wore the Roman garb, the Romans granted them the privilege of continuing to observe their own laws and customs. A Jew like Josephus, who was attached to the conquerors and felt great admiration for them, would adapt himself, but would not change.

Furthermore, that Paul may be Hellenized at all costs, the evidence of the Acts and even his own testimony are challenged. A man who was loyal and discerning is credited with disreputable artifice or childish illusions. If he speaks of a direct revelation, he does so because he had received undeniable proof of it. Concerning the life and teachings of Christ, his information

had come direct from the Apostles. He repeated it exactly as he had heard it. *At Damascus, at Antioch, at Rome, he found Christian communities which had been organized by others, and where his theological language was accepted and understood.* These primitive churches were already joined by a common tradition. Where did this tradition come from, if not from the church of Palestine, from an essentially Jewish milieu?

Do what one will, the texts of the Epistles and the story of the Acts will continue to outweigh the ephemeral systems of the philologists. And historians will always turn to those documents whose structure remains unshaken.

Until the end of time there will be two conflicting methods of recounting facts in which the supernatural plays its necessary part; the one kind of exegetist will always accept the supernatural as such, and the other will subject his interpretation of supernatural events to the postulate that the supernatural is non-existent.

From the purely historical standpoint, the former have the advantage of placing themselves at the axis of those beliefs among which their characters lived; whereas the sceptics are perpetually at odds with the convictions of their heroes. As Renan confessed, it is difficult to understand anything which we do not love and must condemn as false.

As the historian of Saint Paul, Renan has not avoided this lack of comprehension. "The ugly little Jew" astounds him and repels him: he resents his having imposed the Christian lie upon the world; he pronounces him *stiff and brittle.* He fails signally to recognize the practical flexibility of a man who has declared, "To the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain Jews. . . .

I am become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some." He can hardly forgive Paul his scorn of the false sages; and he in turn despises the apostle on the pretext that he belittled science and, as a man of action, was a "feeble artist."

Obviously, Saint Paul put neither science nor art in the first rank of importance. He knew a great deal; and the banter of Festus, "Paul, thou art mad; thy much learning is turning thee mad," should be enough to prove that the extent of his knowledge even dazzled some cultivated Romans. But the only science that he considered of moment was the knowledge of Jesus on the cross. Like all Jews, he distrusted statues and paintings as instruments of idolatry. But he remained sensible to the beauty of the human body; he glorified the harmonious relationship between head and members, the image of Christ, inspirer and leader of the universal communion. He loved sound structures; no form pleased him so much as that of a well-built house or temple; and he has compared himself to a good architect, saying, "I laid a foundation." He had a taste for sacred music and encouraged it. No one, after reading him, would dare deny that he was an admirable poet. Norden has even disclosed passages in the Epistles which are as rhythmic as fragments of verse. Certain doxologies are amplified like hymns. Finally, it is Paul who has given modern art the seed of immortality, "For now we see in a mirror, darkly."

The symbolism of the cathedrals is there; Dante, also Beethoven. No epigraph would better interpret our present aspirations. In a study of Saint Paul we are not called upon to reconstruct a phantom, the preacher of an extinct religion. His story is spirit and life for us; we

seek there the form which we would give to the future.

The world has relapsed, or nearly so, into its condition at the time of the apostles. The Church is confronted by Sadducees, by epicureans for whom the future life offers no inducements, by self-satisfied Pharisees unable to see beyond conventions, formulas, and prescribed motions, by stoics whose own strength is thought sufficient to procure them the peace of the intelligence in their submission to destiny, by theosophists and gnostics who pretend to associate with the Invisible through the medium of magic and dream, by millenarians who proclaim anarchy or communism a paradise on earth, and by the innumerable pagans who have scarcely altered the names of the old idols.

If Saint Paul were to return, he would pass more courtesans in the streets today than he did at Corinth. The sellers of amulets would combine against him in greater numbers than at Ephesus. He would incur more hatred among the powerful, and greater misunderstanding among the masses. His work would be slandered and distorted. He would find the ambuscades of false brethren, the schisms, and the still more tricky heresies. And bitterest of all to him—as he proceeded through this din, his words would probably go unheeded.

And none the less, he would persist.

What was the Church at the moment when he departed with Barnabas for Cyprus? An ardent little sect scattered around a few synagogues. Today this formidable body counts three hundred million believers. It is the one spiritual organization that has survived twenty centuries without varying its principles or its purposes.

Paul would sacrifice his blood for it in 1928 as in the year 67, and he would still preach the same truths: that

one should live according to the spirit, not according to the flesh, should wait with love and patience for the hour of justice and the defeat of evil at the glorious moment of Christ's second coming.

Nothing more is requisite for the peace of the soul. The message which he would bring to faltering mankind would be the same as he once dedicated to the Ephesians, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee."

Is it necessary to say that the present book will not be primarily descriptive? Nor shall I devote myself to facts for their own sake. I should like to penetrate the deeper aspects of Paul's nature. I hope to sketch a synthetic portrait, an ambition which is perhaps incautious; but you will pardon, O great apostle, knowing that it has come to me from a high desire to anticipate eternity in understanding you. Whole mountains of works concerning you have been accumulated. Some are so false and treacherous that one might think them built of the stones that smote you. Some are admirable, but addressed solely to scholars. Mine, in its strict quest of truth, aims to make you accessible even to the most naïve. If others have softened and paganized your image, I plan to restore the sainted and Hebraic ruggedness to your features.

I have followed the presence of Saint Paul through the regions which his memory has made famous. From the heights of Salonica I have observed Olympus, encircled with clouds, such as it appeared to him on his arrival by the Via Egnatia. In the gorges of the Taurus, beyond the Cilician gates, I have drunk of a torrent where he must have slaked his thirst. Too many invasions have rolled across the splendour of Asia; Islam has

buried the ancient cities beneath strata of sand and impurity. Nevertheless, the landscapes remain, and at times they have revealed unexpected facts to me.

While mounting the slopes of the Taurus from Tarsus, I was shown a grotto on the side of an isolated, pyramid-like hill. Tradition has it that Paul lived here as an anchorite. The Acts say that, after the apostle's first struggles with the Hellenistic Jews at Jerusalem, his life was in danger; "and when the brethren knew it, they brought him down to Caesarea, and sent him forth to Tarsus." His sojourn there of three years seems to have been spent in hiding and contemplation. Barnabas, as the narrative explains later, "went forth to seek [3] for Saul; and when he found him he brought him unto Antioch." This episode has often embarrassed those commentators who prefer to believe that Saul had been publicly active as an apostle at Tarsus. They cannot understand why Barnabas *seeks for* him and finally discovers him. Everything is simple, however, if we grant that this was a period of silence and external effacement, during which he retreated as a hermit to the recesses of a rock. It matters little whether the particular location of this grotto is authentic; but the notion of a grotto may very well be the vestige of an old memory, and it suggests an explanation in conformity with the text.

At Tarsus itself, I was struck by a comparison. The plain of Cilicia, with the meandering Cydnus, slopes towards the sea and is closed in the East by the imposing peaks of the Taurus; thus it spreads out like the plain of Ostia through which the old Tiber winds as it leaves behind the crests of the Sabine hills. The hori-

[3] The Greek word indicates a prolonged search, as though it had to do with a man who had disappeared.

zon that Paul had before his eyes as he went to his martyrdom recalled the site of his childhood. And both scenes presented an exact replica of his own mind, rigorously definite on the one side, vast and unbounded on the other.

But we can say of Paul that almost wherever he passed "they knew him not." In Tarsus, the gate of Saint Paul and the well of Saint Paul have nothing in common with the apostle. At Damascus, it would require a singular imagination to find the slightest hint of him at the house which is said to have belonged to Ananias, on the straight street which is no longer straight, with the two pieces of wall joined by a gallery from which the Christians are supposed to have let him down in a basket. Even the road on which the vision appeared to him is a matter of dispute. The miracle is generally believed to have occurred quite near the city; another tradition puts it three leagues away.

In the theatre at Ephesus I mounted the stage from which the *grammateus* harangued the throng of rioters. The stones of these streets, which Paul undoubtedly trod, contain no record of him; and beneath the midday sun they seemed quite new, of untouched whiteness. Ephesus remembers John oftener than Paul; and I felt in the austerely gentle light of its landscapes the same unction as in the evangelical rhythm of the biblical verses.

At Jerusalem, on reaching the Dome of the Rock and observing to one's left the Turkish barracks built on the site of the Fortress Antonia, it is easy to imagine the uprising of the Jews, with Paul dragged out of the Temple, and the Roman officer and his soldiers running to the gates to extricate him. Yet it is but a remote back-

ground, and it gives us no greater insight into the speech which Paul delivered to the Jewish populace.

In the ruins of ancient Corinth, the Americans have exhumed a long street which descended to the port of Lechaeum; at present it loses itself among the files of cypress trees and heavy vines. It was bordered with arcades and little stalls, like the shops of all Oriental bazaars. As we approached a Roman stele, the guard called our attention to a flat stone lying on the ground; and with somewhat ludicrous emphasis, he declared:

"Paul the apostle spoke here."

"How do you happen to know that?" I asked him.

"The director of excavations said so."

I did not contest the point, I did not wish to interpose any objections to this argument of faith. After all, it is quite certain that Paul followed this road, which was congested with great throngs. Perhaps Aquila and Priscilla had their shop in this vicinity, and sold there the materials for the tents which Paul made.

The Acrocorinthus, rising before us like the wall of a gigantic theatre, bore on its summit the temple of Aphrodite, with its college of a thousand priests. Nearer, at the head of the worn steps of a large stairway, six awkward columns still support fragments of their entablature. This was a temple of Neptune or of Apollo. The sun, emerging from a blue-black cloud, set fire to the greyish shafts, the sole remains of the heavy opulence of the parvenus. To our right a strong ledge of rock, the Parachora, overhangs the greenish waters of the gulf. Still higher, and much farther off, we discern the solid mass of the Parnassus, a confusion of shaggy peaks as furious as a bacchanale. At the left, another line of mountains answers them, dropping away more gently

towards the sea. The sea lies before us, at the foot of the cypress trees and the yellowish vines; it is also behind us, the appeal of immensity confined by the bulk of the mountains. Its vapours envelop isthmus and heights. Paul was not sensitive to landscapes; yet how Pauline this one is! And these columns, transfigured by a stormy sun, stand for the city which succumbed to pride, wealth, and luxury, the city which he purified but could not keep from perishing.

Thus I first recovered at Corinth some element of the apostle's presence. In Athens, at the foot of the Acropolis, on the hill of the Areopagus, this presence was made full and pulsating for me, as though I heard Paul's voice resounding in the nutrient air.

While I mounted that august slope, it was he that I sought. I had already climbed near a grove of pines upon the rocky promontory which gives a view of modern Athens and of the wall enclosing the rugged flank of the citadel. I had stood before the Acropolis thinking of the destiny of Hellas and of its conformity with the revelation. But it was a Sunday evening at dusk when I reread on this immortal site Paul's address to the Athenians.

If he delivered it on this very spot—and I liked to imagine that he did—he saw, on turning to the right, the temple of Nike perched on the edge of the plateau, the sturdy Propylaea, the caratides of the Erechtheion, and the hard Parthenon that gives stability to space, as thought masters the wildness of the elements. The surface of the Acropolis in those days was encumbered by statues and aedicula. At present, the sky passes across its columns; the statues have fallen, but the columns remain erect, as though in prayer. On a fragment of the

large frieze, a kneeling woman lifts her hands towards a god that can bring her slight benefit. Was it the Unknown God whom she implored?

Just as we reached the steps of the Areopagus that evening, the sun was breaking clear of the clouds, as at Corinth. A shaft of light disclosed the red, burnished mass of rock and architecture. It penetrated the shadows of the Parthenon; a rearing horse on the frieze came to life again; the broken cornices, the severed blocks atop the walls, everything, became flaming gold; the distant sea also seemed on fire; the sombre promontories and the islands were strung out more sharply, more imperiously.

The momentary apotheosis vanished, but the Acropolis seemed to gain in magnitude. The temple of Nike was no longer that of the wingless victory; it became light, as though lifted bodily. Around us, the pale rocks were dropping away; the long ridge of the Hymettus and the spur of the Pnyx were black. At the summit of the pointed Lycabettus, above the wood, the whiteness of an oratory remained limpid—a lamp was burning there; while below, the immense city was kindling its fires, and cheerful bells suddenly began chiming above their own grave rumble, like a delirious hymn.

This jollity of the bells, on a dominical evening, was the triumph of Paul, the eternity of Christ dominating the dead gods of Athens. I opened the little book of the Acts and began reading aloud:

"Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are very religious. For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you."

The words made me thrill as though I had heard Paul himself declaiming them. For they were certainly gathered from his own lips. What a splendid view of the pagans' confusion in their awaiting of the Truth! But the annunciator continued:

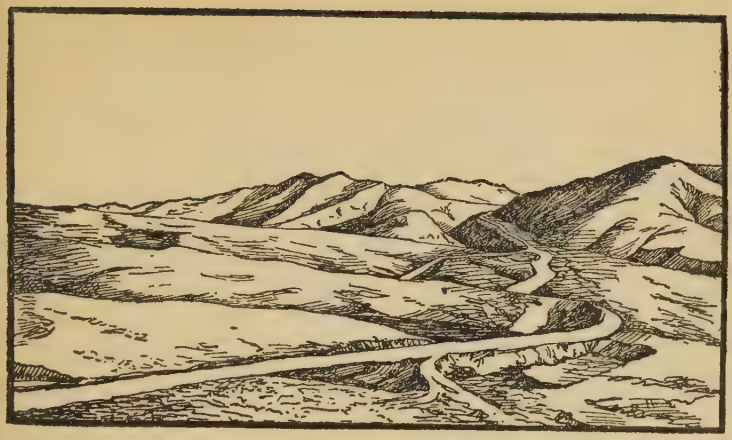
"The God that made the world and all things therein, he, being Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands. . . . Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man."

In uttering these sentences, he undoubtedly stretched out his arm towards the Parthenon; his quiet anathema crushed the trembling idols.

Die then, false gods, that God may live within us. Athena, do you not see the rust upon your helmet? The gleam of your spear shall be extinguished; extinguished the lamp of your sanctuary, which serves the mariners as a beacon. There will not remain sufficient of your statue to carve as little as a thimble. But the wisdom which you made into a lie will now illuminate the living and the dead. The Judge is near; in him all flesh will know the unknowable; through him, all that is on earth and all that is in heaven shall be reconciled in the peace of the blood offered on the Cross.

While night dropped down like a silken shroud upon the Acropolis and me, I repeated with emotion the ineffable passage: "*In ipso vivimus, movemur et sumus.*" In *Him*, in the invisible Virtue, we live and move and have our being. And Paul had said this, at this place where we now drew breath, where we stood praising God, we who are among the living.

SAINT PAUL



I

SAUL THE PERSECUTOR

THE MARTYRDOM OF STEPHEN

VIOLENT from beginning to end, the story of Saint Paul opens on a terrible scene.

It was at the moment when the Twelve had found the need of distinguishing between the temporal and spiritual "business" of the Church, and had decided that "seven men of good report" should be chosen to "serve tables."

The disciples remembered the counsel: "Be anxious not for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on." To observe this precept, they had pooled all their belongings. The rich had offered their revenues, sold their lands and houses, or given their homes to destitute brethren. Thus, only the poor were left among the faithful. Their number was mounting beyond their re-

sources, and it was becoming a complicated matter to meet all their requirements.

The final outcome for each person individually might be the state of blessedness. But for the community, even at Jerusalem, where five sparrows are sold for two farthings and a flask of oil for one, it would entail discomfitures. Not every one showed the same yearning for perfection. Some felt that they came off badly in the daily apportionment. Widows, perhaps burdened with children, claimed more than others, and complaints arose accordingly.

The widows belonged to the families of Hellenistic Jews who had lived in Cilicia, Cyrenaica, Egypt, and Rome, and spoke the international language of the time, a popular form of Greek, the *koine*.

We shall find these Hellenists confronting Paul with turbulence, wrangling, and fanaticism. As they had returned to the holy city from abroad, they boasted of their religious zeal. And, though doubtless contrary to their intentions, they formed a group apart from the other Palestinians, who looked upon them much the way the son of the parable who has remained with his father stares at the younger brother on his return. The very term Hellenist implied distrust, as though they had been corrupted by their long contact with the heathen and by their use of a pagan tongue.

The Hellenists were men of business who applied a Greek varnish to their Judaism in order to fit it better for the universal kingdom. They looked upon strategy, money, and the cult of the intelligence as equally effective means of conquest. They alone bragged of winning proselytes. They were shrewd nationalists; and they were bound to abominate a doctrine which, aiming at the

reign of the spirit, discountenanced their gross methods.

Even when converted—for their élite were touched by the new faith—they maintained their exacting attitude, always defensive and distrustful. On the subject of the widows of their group "there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews." The Twelve, who desired unity and peace, and realized that the communal life would have to be better organized, took this occasion to appoint the Seven.

The assembly of the faithful seems to have made the selection. The seven chosen bore Greek names, but were all Jews by birth except Nicolas, the proselyte of Antioch. After praying, the Twelve laid their hands on them, investing them with liturgical authority. For the deacons would not only be required to superintend distribution of bread; they would participate in the mystery of the eucharist; they would baptize and teach.

Stephen, who had charge of works of charity, a man "full of grace and power," disclosed pre-eminent gifts. He "wrought great wonders and signs among the people." He also preached, catechizing, comforting the poor, and healing the sick.

It has been conjectured that he dared provoke the Hellenistic Jews in their synagogues; whence the fury that was focused upon him. Did he deliberately select such a mission for himself? It is simpler to admit that the Jews, in irritation at his many miracles and conversions, commissioned certain crafty and aggressive orators from the synagogues to challenge him publicly, for the purpose of humiliating him and lowering his prestige.

Some of his opponents attended the synagogue of the Cilicians. Saul of Tarsus must have been among them. Born around the year 10 or 12, he was now about

twenty-three or twenty-five years of age. The Pharisees undoubtedly attacked Stephen on the doctrine of Christ. The debate resulted simply in their own confusion; "they were not able to withstand the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake."

Then, in order to destroy him, they trumped up more serious calumnies. Stephen had blasphemed against Moses, the Temple, and the Law. *Against the Temple!* No offence could be more formidable. It was the crime of which Jesus had been accused.

The Temple stood for the restoration and permanence of Israel. All the pride and riches of the people of Jehovah were concentrated here. The one holy place, the navel of the world, it was filled with the glory of God. It gleamed from afar, like a mountain of marble, with the pinnacles of its roof in gold, the columns of its portico and its nine doors encrusted with gold and silver, and the tenth in Corinthian bronze so heavy that, according to Josephus, the strength of twenty men was needed to close it. From morning until evening there was a continual procession of sacrifices, with the blood of goats and bulls bespattering the horns of the altar, and the fat of the burnt offerings smoking above the fire-pans. The blare of horns and trumpets and the sound of psalms rang above the city with rhythms of warlike piety. Finally, the treasure, the Corban, contained formidable and mysterious riches. No one had forgotten the golden beam that was concealed beneath a joist of wood, and which was said to weigh three hundred minas. Were the Temple with its pilgrimages and sacrifices to cease, what would become of the merchants of Jerusalem and the breeders of Palestine?

Any disparagement of the Temple, any mention of

its possible destruction, must have seemed to the Jews like a monstrous and supreme sacrilege; and they would find it all the more exasperating because they already had premonitions of the catastrophe which, it had been predicted, would befall them and their city.

Stephen's enemies incited an uprising of the populace against him, perhaps in the Temple itself. Nothing was easier to arrange in a city full of mendicants and overzealous pilgrims, where there were hundreds of synagogues to pass around the watchword of a conspiracy. He braved the throng, bearing witness to the Righteous One, to the Son of Man slain by the same Israelites who now desired his own destruction.

Elders, scribes, and Pharisees were called as witnesses of his impious language. He was seized, cast into prison, and finally brought before the great Sanhedrin.

According to a statement in the Talmud, "*forty* years before the destruction of the Temple the right of pronouncing the death-sentence was denied to Israel." As a matter of fact, whenever the pressure of Rome was felt to relax (and the present trial of Stephen must have coincided with the disgrace and departure of Pilate) the Sanhedrin tended to resume its juridical powers. Furthermore, the Romans conceded its right to pass judgment in the matter of religious offences, but the verdict had to be endorsed by the procurator,—a humiliating restriction which the Pharisees never despaired of seeing abolished.

In Stephen's case they would act with the same combination of violence and hypocrisy as they had shown toward Jesus. The affair would be abruptly terminated by a popular uprising. The prisoner would be driven to the place of punishment before being regularly con-

demned. There would be a legal element in his execution, thought this would be denied. His death would recall that of Achan, who was stoned to death by the populace in the valley of Achor for having stolen the Babylonish mantle and the two hundred shekels of silver that were to be offered to the Lord.

The Sanhedrin convened within the Temple. The room was arranged in a semicircle, so that the seventy judges, as explained in the Talmud, might survey one another and exchange glances. On the right and the left, two scribes took down the opinions delivered, and their reasons. In the centre sat the high priest, probably distinguished from the others by a gold band about his head and by the gems of the breastplate that he wore on all solemn occasions.

In front of the judges sat three rows of disciples, each row with three members, and each member having his designated place. Among them we may imagine Saul, glaring upon Stephen murderously.

The prisoner stood up, magnificent in his spotless purity. When the witnesses declared, "For we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered unto us," he did not appear to have heard, but seemed to be in ecstasy. The flames of the infuriated eyes which darted forth at him seemed to be transformed upon his face into an angelic glow. He presented himself as accuser and judge of his judges, like the prophets who once stood before the kings. He and James the Less, who was later driven from the Temple and stoned, were to be the last *nabhiim.*

The high priest questioned him as though inviting

him to defend himself, but really intending to overwhelm him with the evidence of his crime:

"Are these things so?"

Stephen answered with a sublime speech, proclaiming doctrines which Paul would eventually understand. Instead of exonerating himself, he pictured the past of Israel since the promises received from Abraham. He tried to make it plain that the promises went beyond the existence of the Temple, if not of the Mosaic cult.

For centuries Israel had worshipped its God, nomadic like itself, in one place or another; and the tabernacle had been nothing but a tent raised for an evening, the tent of shepherds on the march. The burning bush from which the voice of the Lord had spoken to Moses had been the true "holy land." The Hebrews in the desert had served idols, saying to Aaron: "Make us gods which shall go before us." They had prostrated themselves beneath the "host of heaven." Solomon had built an habitation for the God of Jacob; but "the Most High dwelleth not in houses made with hands; as sayeth the prophet, The heaven is my throne, and the earth the footstool of my feet: What manner of house will ye build me?"

Into this history of a people, where the great facts stand out like portions of the horizon at night beneath the flashes of an approaching storm, Stephen interpolated mortifying allusions to the Righteous One disowned, betrayed, and denied by his brothers, as too clearly prefigured in Joseph and Moses. He did not disguise his conviction that a wholly material faith in the Temple was equivalent to idolatry.

The auditors followed his reasoning closely enough to

be horrified by it. All the old Pharisees, with their arms folded in their long sleeves, became aroused; the young men shifted and murmured. At the start they had listened; the Jews respected a prisoner's right to defend himself; they took unending delight in narratives where the adventures of their forefathers, told with prophetic comments, promised them a return of their glory, a deliverance equal to that of the past. Stephen, like his master Jesse, spoke not as a scribe or a casuistic orator, but as though "endowed with power." The stirrings of indignation increased as his exegesis became more manifestly hostile. Far from attempting to allay this indignation, he suddenly defied it in a declamation which we may believe to be transcribed for us very much as he delivered it:

"Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed them which shewed before of the coming of the Righteous One; of whom ye have now become betrayers and murderers; ye who received the law as it was ordained by angels, and kept it not."

The listeners trembled; with each word "they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth." Whoever has seen a crowd of angered Orientals will not find it hard to picture the Sanhedrin at this ominous moment—the undulation of the blue cloaks, the crossing glances of eyes rolling with ferocity, the extended jaws, the noses like the pincers of crabs, and hooked fingers converging upon the accused as though to tear him into pieces. There was a confusion of enraged hisses and raucous shouts.

Nothing could disturb Stephen. Did he perceive these

breathings of destruction that rumbled about his head? A ravishment uplifted him; he was eager for the promised delights, eager for Paradise. He stood motionless like a column of light; but of a sudden, impatient to bring men into the presence of his God, he cried with his head thrown back and his arms outstretched towards an invisible brightness, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."

Blasphemy! And as evidence, he swore to the glory and Resurrection of the Nazarene. The Jews held back no longer; they stopped their ears, and the whole room rose with a single burst of frenzy to drag the infidel from the Sanhedrin. The populace, massed about the doors, received him with shouts of death. Yet he was not stoned in this place. It was ordered in Leviticus: "Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp." They led Stephen outside the city, probably to a hill north of Jerusalem.

In accordance with the law, "at a distance of about ten cubits from the place of punishment," they undressed the condemned man; they told him to confess "because all the punished confess, and he who confesses will have his part in the future life." The stoning had to take place on a rise of ground twice the height of a man. The two witnesses placed their hands on the prisoner as though he were a sacrificed victim. Then one of them felled him, in such a way that he dropped *on his back,* not on his stomach. "If he was dead, nothing more was done to him; if not, the other witness threw a stone upon his heart; if he was not dead, all those present finished the work with stones."

It appears that the Jews proceeded differently in

the execution of Stephen. To be less hampered, the two witnesses "laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul." But immediately afterwards we see the martyr attacked by stones, and standing until the moment when he *kneeled* and expired. Thus his execution was thoroughly ritual and tumultuous. His martyrdom duplicated in miniature the Passion of Christ. In contemplating death, he had prepared himself to merit *the crown,* as his name predestined him. The disciple had infinitely less to suffer than the Master. He was content to be, in his turn, perfect in immolation.

"Lord Jesus," he said, "receive my spirit." And kneeling, he begged *in a loud voice:* "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." The doctrine of forgiveness was integral to the Redemption. Since the God-man had remitted the unpardonable sin with his blood, how could a mere human dare call down vengeance upon his enemies? But Stephen did not stop at forgiveness; he offered himself as a sacrifice in behalf of his executioners, and for one in particular whom he possibly knew, for Saul, whose mission was prepared by his death.

We should like to follow Saul through the various steps in the trial and execution. His wrath against Stephen arose from an outraged love: the blasphemer must die; the Law and the holy places demanded justice.

Was he vaguely shaken by Stephen's argument? We can know nothing of this. Stephen's ecstasy, his outcry, "I see the heavens opened," recurred to him more than once, as the scandalous evidence of an illusion which he did not wish to admit. But when a fact contradicts a belief which is deep-rooted and stronger than all else, it remains non-existent, at least so far as the conscious aspects of the inner life are concerned.

While the howling mob surrounded the martyr, and the executioners gathered about him in a circle to strike him with the stones of the road, Saul looked on, pale and trembling with restrained fury. He himself cast no stones; it was enough for him to assist those who did the actual striking. He considered with astonishment this calm man who made no effort to defend himself; the missiles lacerated his forehead, his outstretched hands, the bared bleeding chest and bruised loins. He did not groan, he barely trembled beneath the blows; and the strength of his voice remained undimmed while he sent up towards God the prayers of one who was happy to be sacrificed. When the mortal blow struck him on the head or above the heart, he stretched himself out in his own blood upon the ground, as though it were a comfortable bed. "He fell asleep," say the Acts. "What intrepid hardihood!" Saul must have thought. The Nazarene error would require merciless severity. And if he felt some qualms of pity, he repressed them as a weakness. He returned to the city more confirmed than ever in his hate.

SAUL AND THE CHURCH

The high priest, Caiaphas, and the elders of the people thought as he did. One act of violence demands others. The disciples of Stephen, or some pious proselytes, buried the saint [1] with a solemnity in their affliction that glorified him. To end this obstinate heresy, its methodical suppression was decided upon. Such a course

[1] According to the Law, the body of the stoned man would have to hang from a gibbet until nightfall. The Acts do not say that this disgrace was inflicted upon Stephen.

was possible at the beginning of the reign of Caligula, in the brief interval when Judaea breathed more easily, between the departure of an odious procurator (whose disgrace seemed a victory over Rome) and the arrival of his successor.

The persecution was aimed systematically at the Nazarenes of Hellenistic origin. Like Stephen, they boldly neglected the Temple, if not the Law. The Twelve, who were natives of Palestine and adhered more strictly to the Mosaic observances, remained at Jerusalem; and nothing leads us to believe that they were molested at this time. The others dispersed, carrying the Gospel with them and thus aiding in its spread.

Do the Christian communities of Samaria, Syria, and Alexandria date from this period or earlier? There was one group at Antioch, and another at Damascus, since Saul was soon to go in pursuit of it.

How did Saul, after playing a secondary rôle in the martyrdom of Stephen as a simple guardian of the vestiary, reappear shortly afterwards as the deputy of the Sanhedrin, invested with important executive authority, which he wielded like a madman? His zeal, his vehemence in the performance of his duties, had undoubtedly made him of value. His qualities as a leader were impressive. In crises of terrorism, it is always the young who are at the head of such movements.

The narrator of the Acts has expressly emphasized the ferocity of his campaign, speaking of it in three different passages. Saul entered the homes of suspects, dragged out the men and women, herded them into gaols, ordered them beaten, compelled them to renounce their faith, or brought them back to Jerusalem and appeared before the tribunals to insure their execution.

Also, four times in his Epistles Paul evokes his past as a persecutor. And he would have returned to the matter oftener had not the churches known of it down to the slightest detail.

"For ye have heard," he wrote to the Galatians, "of my manner of life in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and made havoc of it: and I advanced in the Jews' religion beyond many of mine own age among my countrymen, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers."

We have no reason to suppose that Paul exaggerated his violence fifteen or twenty years later, as a stronger proof that he had been converted despite himself, without merit or preparation. Rather, the remarkable thing about his confession is the note of detachment. No single word entitles us to conclude that the memory of his violence had tormented him with remorse. Later, he would explain very simply to Timothy how he had been able to find grace before God:

"I thank him that enabled me, even Christ Jesus our Lord, for that he counted me faithful, appointing me to his service; though I was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: howbeit I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

Thus Saul's fury arose from his exasperated zeal for the religion which he considered as the only true one. His cruelties would find an explanation in this keen statement by Pascal, "A person never does evil with such thoroughness and willingness as when he is actuated by conscience."

But we must also realize the nature of the Jewish mind and its environment in the first century. It would

be very wrong to imagine the people of Israel as particularly ferocious. Its history discloses no subnormality of pity and tenderness. Harshness of character had been tempered by the divine unction, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength." The principle of fear was moderated by one of gentleness, in the relationship between Jehovah and his people. "The Lord thy God has carried thee, as a man is wont to carry his little son."

In the bosom of the family, the relations between father and children, brothers and kinsmen, were regulated by a sacred law demanding the "circumcision of the heart." Goodness and forgiveness had their place here. Prior to the father of the parable in the Gospels, they had remembered Esau holding Jacob, weak and humiliated, in his arms; Joseph becoming reconciled with his worthless brothers; David weeping over poor Absalom and crying: "Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son Absalom!"

According to the Mosaic code, the judges had to mete out justice to aliens as well as Hebrews, to the lowly as well as the great, without regard for persons, because their judgment was "the judgment of God." On beginning a war, before attacking the city of the enemy they should "first offer it peace." And they were required to respect captured women for one month.

Moses forbade delivering up the fugitive slave to his master, or keeping the "pledge" of a poor debtor for more than one day. He commanded the rich to be generous to the poor, and to leave some olives on the olive trees and some grapes on the vines, "for the stranger, for the fatherless, and the widow." He even taught kindness to animals: "If thou find, as thou walkest by

the way, a bird's nest in a tree, or on the ground, and the dam sitting upon the young or upon the eggs, thou shalt not take her with her young." Josephus, vaunting the humanity of the Jewish Law, observes that it forbade the killing of animals "if they entered a house *beseechingly.*"

A people which had conceived and understood, literally at least, the Song of Songs, the Psalms, and the books of the Prophets, could not fail to appreciate the refinements or the severities of divine or human love. Nowhere is there a more forceful sense of the fact that love is formed of pity.

But could the Jews escape the basic harshness of all the Semitic Orient? When one thinks of the Assyrian tyrants, and of the ritual atrocities which are attested by the bas-reliefs and inscriptions of these regions, one is less astonished to see Israel, in its wars with its terrible neighbors, exterminating the men, women, and little children of whole cities, setting fire to the houses, and leaving nothing behind but ashes and horror. The Hebrews, knowing what awaited them if they spared the idolaters, visited upon them the just punishment of Jehovah; furthermore, in exterminating them, they protected themselves against their formidable gods.

Israel was necessarily fanatical; otherwise it would have succumbed, and along with it the covenant, the evidence of the one true God. It knew that it was chosen from among all the peoples, and its pride in such a prerogative was savage. No aristocratic hauteur could be compared to that of the Jews. And such great pride, when outraged, becomes cruel in attempting to be just. Consequently, their persecutions were so relentless that

even those of the Spanish hidalgos would seem relatively slight.

Despite some fertile districts, the region in which they settled is as austere as its climate. A country of deep valleys and abrupt ridges, with little access to the sea, it repels the foreigner. Six months of rainless summer, followed by a very severe winter. The villages on the hillsides resemble piles of rock. Nowhere else in the world is stone so ubiquitous; we can readily understand how lapidation became so characteristic a mode of punishment among the Jews. Beneath each heap of silica one might expect to find the skeleton of a man killed by stoning. I know of nothing more desolate, particularly in the autumn, than the descent from Jerusalem to Jericho: one knoll of barren earth after another, with an occasional covering of brushwood, or coloured a leprous grey, weighted with livid swellings, above a reddish gorge with rocks yawning and protruding like the jaws of transformed beasts.

Such regions are fit for none but brigands or stern clans antagonistic to every infraction of the customs and principles of the community.

The Mosaic Law enclosed them within a wall of rites and dogmas and a meticulous sense of the unclean. It required these rapacious peasants to sacrifice their stock, demanding on certain days an enormous number of victims.[3] At the major festivals, the parvis of the Temple became an enormous slaughterhouse; the cries of the slain animals drowned out the voices of the priests, who were little more than indefatigable butchers. Sometimes

[3] The Paralipomena record the immolation of twenty-two thousand oxen and one hundred and twenty thousand rams for the dedication of the Temple of Solomon. Josephus speaks of two thousand calves and one hundred and twenty thousand lambs for the same ceremony.

the Levites had to mount on footstools in order not to dip their legs in the stream of blood. The morning of Yom Kippur, the great feast-day in October, when they had laid their hands upon the goat that bore the sins of the people, all the assistants spat upon it, pricking it with thorns. Its head was bound with a band of scarlet wool; and taking whips, the priests drove it beyond the city, to some deserted place. Here they tore the fleece from its back and scattered it among the brush, hurling the animal over a precipice. If it still lived, no one would give it food; it wandered off into some gorge to die like a thing accursed.

Though such sacrificial rites seem atrocious to us, they were much milder than those of the idolaters, who offered up their sons on the funeral pile of Moloch, or frantically mutilated themselves in public, like the priests of Cybele. These rites brought the Jews to repentance, by commemorating the sufferings with which Jehovah had afflicted their impious or fornicating ancestors. They prefigured the substitution of a Victim who was perfect and gave himself willingly: the Christ pierced with thorns, beaten, and dishonoured. But in brutal minds they aroused the taste for blood, a kind of lewdness and pruriency deflected into an intoxication of slaughter.

Furthermore, the Jews were subject to iniquitous masters; and even while bending to the conqueror they plotted grim reprisals. If ever their cult or their Law were impinged upon, their resistance was savage and the vengeance inexorable. When Antiochus Epiphanes attempted to Hellenize the Jews, setting up a statue of Zeus in the Temple and forbidding circumcision, the Pharisees persisted in having the new-born circumcised.

All those who were denounced were beaten with rods, mutilated, and placed on the cross; and the executioners, after strangling the children, hung their bodies about the necks of the crucified. When Herod had a golden eagle nailed upon the Temple, two doctors, Judas and Matthias, tore it down in broad daylight, before a throng of people, and shattered it with blows of a hatchet. They were seized, and defended their violence with the one argument, "We are avenging the outrage done to God and to the honour of the Law of which we are the disciples." All that was needed to unloose a furious uprising was for Pilate to think of bearing through the streets of Jerusalem certain military insignia with the medallion of Caesar. When Caligula attempted to place his statue as a "new Jupiter" in the Temple, he nearly caused all Judaea to rebel against Rome.

The more closely harassed by Hellenism [4] the Jewish nation found itself, and the harder it was pressed by Roman arrogance and rapacity, the stronger became its spirit of revolt; but it was kept ineffectual by a chaos of internal broils. Sadducees, bourgeois, and sceptics like our contemporary radicals, intransigent Pharisees, zealots, and enlightened demagogues, detested one another. Armed bands and brigandage were increasing. The high priests hired seditionaries to provoke riots, sending men into the barns to seize tithes belonging to the sacrificers, "some of whom," Josephus reports, "were so impoverished that they were dying of hunger." On feast-days professional assassins arrived at Jerusalem with daggers hidden beneath their mantles. They

[4] According to Josephus, in the pogroms of Alexandria under Caligula the Greeks massacred fifty thousand Jews; whence the delegation to the emperor led by Philo.

stabbed people during the ceremonies, and when their victims fell dead they would lean over them as though to assist them, thus escaping detection.

The ferocity of manners and the exasperation of the individual had already attained that intensity which would culminate in the heroic atrocities of the siege of Jerusalem and the horrors of Masada. Josephus, who was a man of culture, explains as a matter of course how he treated a factionist of Tiberias, who had come simply to ask him for a sum which he did not owe: "I ordered him beaten with rods, and one hand to be severed and fastened about his neck; and in this condition I sent him back to them." Later he bids another factionist cut off his own left hand with a stroke of his sword. And this man hastens to comply.

Thus, in his aggressive treatment of the Nazarenes Saul was acting with no greater severity than any good sectarian Pharisee would have employed. He also evinced the zealousness of youth, and a sense of pride at excelling in a just cause. Furthermore, he heard daemonic promptings. As he subsequently said: "Our wrestling is not against flesh and blood; but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world." The powers from below armed him with their fury. They had chosen him as a perfect messenger of destruction.

For the rest, he believed that he understood the history of Jesus and his teachings, which he interpreted without discernment, as "a sinful man." They scandalized and outraged him. He was a Pharisee; and Jesus had crushingly rebuked the pride and hypocrisy of the Pharisees. Israel was awaiting a Messiah who would wreak vengeance upon its oppressors and place it above

all other nations. Isaiah had foretold that "the government shall be upon his shoulder." This misunderstood prophecy had spread throughout the Orient, and even attracted the attention of the Romans. Jesus, who had deceived the worldly hopes of Israel, seemed like a foe to be destroyed in the person of his disciples, false prophets blaspheming against the eternity of the Law and the future of the holy people. What would become of their prerogatives if all the nations were called unto the Kingdom? In persecuting the Galileans, Saul thought that he was offering "service unto God."

It has been asserted that he could not track them beyond Palestine, as far as Syria. But in a time of disorder the Sanhedrin hastened to recover a penal privilege which it prized jealously. At the time, Syria belonged to King Aretas, the brother-in-law of the tetrarch Herod; and the Jews, as we learn from Paul himself, were on good terms with Aretas. In fact, wherever there was a Jewish community, the emissary of the Sanhedrin possessed executive authority.

Every persecutor becomes one of the persecuted. He cannot sleep, through fear that his victims are eluding him. He never has sufficient spies to swell the lists of his suspects. Necessarily, his inquisition will extend as far as his terrorism can create an area of emptiness. For this reason we shall find Saul, with an escort of police, marching towards Damascus, "breathing out threatening and slaughter," trembling in his eagerness to annihilate a Church which thought itself under cover.

But before joining him on this scorching road where he was to meet with Christ, we should know him better, and should note the broader traits of his personality.

WHO WAS SAUL?

He has taken it upon himself to answer us; he has drawn up a brief description of his social status, exhibiting his claims to Jewish nobility only to cancel them again with scorn:

"If any other thinketh he may have confidence in the flesh, I more, being circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; according to the law, a Pharisee."

Today the account would seem a little vague. Still, it is not unimportant to learn that Saul, "an Hebrew of the Hebrews," was of the tribe of Benjamin, and a Pharisee.

Since he was born outside of Palestine, he was bound all the more strictly to the traditions of his ancestors, as evidence that he owed everything to Judaism. But he profited by another advantage: his family ranked among the tribe of Benjamin, which marched at the head of processions because it had been the first to cross the Red Sea. And Benjamin, alone with Judah, had raised up the walls of Zion. Further, as a Pharisee he belonged to a superior caste, bearing somewhat the same relation to other Jews as that between the ordained and lay members of an Order. The Pharisees, a "people apart," put themselves above most Jews; they alone possessed the irreproachable virtue of great knowledge—and how could any one be pleasing to the Lord who did not know the Law in its entirety? And they boasted of meditating on the Law both night and day; the tighter they made its precepts and the stricter they made its constraints, the more they admired themselves before God.

In Saul such theocratic hauteur was doubtless im-

mense. When converted, he would recognize that racial pride is a miserable vanity, something to be cast to the dogs. For the moment, he should be pardoned: no other people had such cause as Israel to glory in its birth; it was the one nation chosen by the Almighty and led by him through grandeur and disaster, that it might guard the essential verities and the seed from which the God-man would take form.

The Messiah having come, the Jewish people could now have perished, like the shrub of the desert when its purple flower has risen on its stem. It has survived as witness; the consciousness of its divine mission had endowed it with such strength that it has remained a sovereign people even in its fall. What matter if it has, for centuries, swallowed affronts like water? It still remembers the taste of the wine of Masters; it has never doubted itself; this tenacious faith predestined it to dominate the nations; and now, it has made of all the "footstool of its feet."

At Jerusalem, one Friday, about four o'clock—it was the time when devout Israelites are beginning to light candles by the Wailing Wall and to chant psalms—I noticed a little hunchback who carried his head erect while muttering his prayers. He held a book in his hand, and was swaying with an expression of almost arrogant satisfaction. I said to myself, "There is Saul!"

In Saul Jewish pride was matched by Pharisee hauteur, and for the latter Jesus had none but formidable words. The speech which Matthew summarizes in Chapter xxiii is a magnificent portrait of the caste, and is further aimed at the sense of superiority in general. The Pharisees acted purely for appearance' sake. They made their phylacteries larger, and lengthened the fringe of

their robes. They loved the couches of honour at banquets and the benches of honour in the synagogues. They enjoyed being greeted in public places, being called "Rabbi, Rabbi! . . ."

Thus we might say that Saul could boast of membership in a distinguished Jewish family. Yet his father was not a Hebrew of Judaea, but a Hellenist who had been settled abroad for some time. He bore the title of Roman citizen, which was handed down to his son.

Tarsus is not mentioned once in the Epistles. But in the Acts Paul is made to say, in Aramaic: "I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cilicia.[5] Tarsus, near the sea, at the terminus of the only route by which the caravans from Asia Minor crossed through the Cilician gates, was then one of the largest cities of the Orient. The broad, magnificent plain of Cilicia, with its wealth of cotton and wheat, would suggest Egypt if it did not lie against the slopes of the Taurus, whose cloud-capped peaks close it to the west.

A point of junction between upper Asia and the coast—boats from all quarters of the Mediterranean came up the Cydnus to its wharves—it served as a confluent of civilizations. Here Hellas added its imprints to those of Assyria, Persia, and Phoenicia. Its coins often bore the figure of Baal in the likeness of Zeus, with an eagle at his side. Tarsus combined Greek elegance with the rites and pleasures of the old Orient. It was here, on the golden prow of her galley, beneath sails of perfumed silk, that Cleopatra had awaited Anthony. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians quoting the Greek proverb,[6]

[5] He probably had two names from childhood: a Jewish name, Saul, and a Roman one with a Greek termination: Paulos.

[6] I Cor. xv, 32. This proverb is met with in the Thaïs of Menander, but had previously appeared in Isaiah (xxii, 13). Paul must have taken it from Isaiah.

"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we shall die," he was perhaps also remembering the Assyrian inscription not far from Tarsus on the statue of Sardanapalus, the statue posed as though it were about to snap its fingers. "Stranger, eat, drink, and be merry; for all else cannot equal *this*."

The people of Tarsus possessed, to an exceptional degree, the usual Oriental gift for linguistics and improvisation. The schools of Tarsus sent grammarians and philosophers to Rome. Stoicism flourished there.

On the shores of the Cydnus, a celebrated gymnasium attracted the best masters. Did Saul attend it as a child? Did he learn Greek in a Jewish school, near the synagogue, or under a pedagogue in his father's home? The essential thing for us is that he was thoroughly familiar with the language of ideas, the idiom which could best promote the spread of his doctrine. Had he been born in Jerusalem, his knowledge of Greek would have been at the best inadequate. The rabbis would not allow it to be taught to boys except, they said in raillery, "when it was neither day nor night." They distrusted Greek as the vehicle of the pagan lie; whoever had sucked the honey of the Hellenic myths would find the truth of the Scriptures bitter.

Better still than Greek, Saul remembered what was taught to all young Hebrews: the eighteen benedictions of the Amidah, the psalmody of the Hallel. He had seen the reader in the synagogue draw forth the case holding the scrolls of the Law, and he could recall the lighting of the Sabbath lamps each Friday evening at the home of his father.

He had also learned the rudiments of a manual trade. We know from the Acts that he was a tent-maker.

There is no evidence that his father was an artisan. But the doctors taught that every good Jew should be able to work with his hands; and the famous Shammai displayed a carpenter's chip behind his ear. Saul knew how to make those black goat-hair tents beneath which the Cilician shepherds still find shelter. In a suburb of Tarsus, I saw workers preparing the cloth by simple methods that must have changed but little since the time of Paul.

There were three of them in a shed open at the sides, three emaciated men somewhat bald and grey, with ascetic faces. The first, who was standing, worked a spinning-wheel from which two strands of cord were hanging. From a bag resting against his apron he drew out the hairs one by one, and twisted them around the moving cord. In this way he spun, walking backwards from the rear of the shed to the entrance, where he laid down the length of string alongside the others.

His two companions were seated on the ground on lambskins, with their feet in a hole. In front of each of them was a large loom tilted back somewhat. They arranged the warp here, separating it with a wooden knife, skilfully running the shuttle between the taut threads and fastening them. Then they would draw out the warp and woof with a quick stroke of the card, a massive tool of polished wood which, but for its teeth, resembled a yoke for oxen.

It is readily conceivable how Paul, after manipulating this card for hours, wrote with a numbed hand. When he says to the Galatians, "See with how large letters I have written unto you with mine own hand," he is not alluding to his bad eyes, which would have forced him to make his letters larger. He wrote like a

workman whose hands were stiff from holding some very heavy object.

From the artisans of Tarsus I gathered a few details that serve to make certain facts of his life more definite. Their trade is profitable, and *it must always have been so.* Thus Paul provided for the needs of himself and the poor without being a charge to any one; he could observe in a bountiful manner the maxim of the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

I also learned from comrades who were far removed from the Apostle, and might not even know his name, that they, like him, toiled "night and day." They slept on sackcloth; perhaps he did the same. But their work was so uniform and machine-like that it would leave them plenty of opportunity to follow their own thoughts; and without interrupting the play of shuttle and card Paul must have considered the churches, or preached to his companions.

During his years as an apprentice, he little suspected that in weaving goat-hair he was preparing for his apostleship. The study of the Scriptures and the lore of the rabbis captivated him all the more.

His father wanted him to complete his training as a Pharisee and a scholar. Like all young Jews, around the age of twelve he went on a religious pilgrimage to Jerusalem. If we interpret literally his remarks to the Jews on the subject of his education, we should conclude that even his boyhood was spent in the holy city. But he adds that he was brought up "at the feet of Gamaliel." Would the famous rabbi have admitted him as an auditor if he were not already a mature student?

We can readily imagine Saul sitting at the feet of the master, his hands crossed on the knees, like those young

Mussulmans in the mosques contemplating the imam in silence and ravishment, their eyes filled with a kind of ecstasy, while the doctor, from behind a little table, harangues them with the zeal of a prophet.

The education of a Jewish student could be compared to that of a seminarist in a strict sacerdotal environment. The knowledge which he absorbed centred around the Scriptures and the Law. He had to know the Pentateuch thoroughly, to read the prophets, to become an exegetist and a theologian. He also read some esoteric writings like the Book of Enoch and the Assumption of Moses.

But Jewish exegesis took delight in unforeseen conclusions, engrafting upon the texts of the allegories an ingenious and paradoxical dialectic. Thus, the Baba Batra on the first man:

"The Holy One (be he praised) has made all men of the earth in the image of Adam, and no one is like unto any other. Accordingly, each must say to himself that the world had been created for him alone. . . .

"God has made three things different in man: the face, to avoid confusion; the thoughts, to avoid theft; the voice, to avoid unlawful unions in the darkness."

The Scriptures themselves were submerged beneath the commentaries on the Law. A labour as bewildering as that of mastering the greater Chinese alphabet was required to retain without notes—for it was forbidden to write down the decisions of the rabbis—all the cases that it presented, the contradictory and possible solutions which it implied.

No act should be performed without blessing the Lord, and every benediction demanded a special formula. At table one never pronounced the same words to

bless radishes cut in small pieces and turnips cut lengthwise. The Pharisees washed their hands before drinking. But according to Shammai, it was necessary to make this ablution first, and then pour the water into the cup; while according to Hillel, the water should be poured before washing.

And then there were endless quibbles on the subject of impurities, and as to what could or could not be done on the Sabbath.[7] There was the casuistry of wrongs and their punishment:

"If a fowl, in flying from one place to another, causes damage by its contact, the owner will be responsible for the entire damage. But if the injury results from the draft caused by the wings, the owner will have to make good only half the loss."

"One ass is followed by another; it slips and falls; then the other arrives, strikes against it and falls also; finally a third strikes against this second and falls in turn; the master of the first will have to pay the damages to the master of the second, and the second to the third."

"If a man beats his father or his mother and wounds them, or if he wounds some one on the Sabbath, he will pay nothing because he is condemned to death. If a man wounds his own pagan slave, he is not required to make payment." [8]

It will hardly be surprising if Saint Paul's logic preserves traces of quibbling, and shows a predilection for abrupt turns in the progress of his ideas. A tract on his master, Rabbi Gamaliel, which is consigned to the Tal-

[7] Is it necessary to recall the opposition of Hillel and Shammai on the grave issue as to whether, on a holiday, one could eat an egg laid during the day?

[8] Baba Gama.

mud, reveals, if it is authentic, the subtle irony of a sophist who has an answer for everything:

"Gamaliel was on his way to bathe at the baths of the goddess Aphrodite at Acco. (The temple of this goddess, its priests, and all the others connected with it were supported by the revenues from these baths.) A pagan named Proclus ben Philosophos asked him how he could permit himself to bathe in an edifice devoted to the service of an idol, when the Mosaic Law forbade any one to receive benefit from objects consecrated to pagan deities. On leaving, R. Gamaliel answered, 'I do not enter the domain of the idol, but it enters mine; the baths were not built in honour of Aphrodite; she merely serves there as an adornment.' "

Gamaliel, like his grandfather Hillel, was distinguished by a comparative breadth of views that counteracted the stiff, punctilious casuistry of Shammai. He represented the *liberal school* among the Pharisees. His language in the Sanhedrin on the subject of the apostles expresses an attitude strangely compounded of laisser-faire and fatalistic trust in Providence:

"And now, therefore, I say to you, refrain from these men, and leave them alone; for if this council or if this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, you cannot overthrow it, lest perhaps you be found even to fight against God."

It has been supposed that a divine inspiration suggested to him this evasive policy. Tradition represents him as secretly a Christian.[9] However that may be, he and Saul made a striking antithesis: the master was quiet and unperturbed, an advocate of clemency, while the

[9] The Recognitions, an apocryphal, heretical book dating from the second century, says of him: "Gamaliel, leader of the people, was secretly our brother."

disciple opposed such doctrines with as much vigour as any Jacobin of '93 would bring to his denial of a Necker or a Montesquieu.

It would be vain to attempt casting further light upon this question as to whether Paul was or was not a rabbi. The disciple is frequently the opposite of the master, just as the son may be the negation of the father. Gamaliel had a son who was fanatical, and hostile to the Christians. Saul in his youth was a person of great independence. He was given to extremes, and brought all the impetuosity of his nature to bear upon his hatreds. If he admired the learning and authority of Gamaliel, he considered his liberalism dangerous. And from the Jewish standpoint was he wrong?

It now seems frightful and absurd to imagine that the Christian faith might have been strangled in its infancy. Considering the subject from the human point of view, we should say that it could very well have succumbed had its enemies attacked it consistently and mercilessly. But the emperors would not persecute it systematically until the second or third centuries, and by then it was too strong to kill. The Jewish persecution was brief, intermittent, and vacillatory. A higher power balked and paralyzed it. Though Herod ordered Peter bound between the soldiers by two chains, an angel touched them, and they fell apart. The iron gate opened of itself. And Saul, at the very moment that he thought himself victorious over Jesus the Nazarene, was to be made his bondsman, "a chosen vessel."

II

SAUL THE SEER

ON THE ROAD TO DAMASCUS

It was midday—the hour when, seated at the entrance of his tent, Abraham suddenly perceived the three men standing before him; the hour when Jesus came to repose at the side of the fountain after he could do no more, and said to the woman who was drawing water, "Give me to drink."

A cloud of dust was moving along the road, among rocks that gleamed like cones of salt. Here was a caravan hastening towards Damascus. At the foot of the clay-coloured hills, in the direction from which the north wind was blowing, confused borders of green stood out: these were the orchards surrounding the city! The company had been on the march for a week. And now at last: the comfort of nearing its destination, the refreshing effect of the water absorbed by the voracious

air. The ass-drivers prodded their beasts: the shadows of the camels, laden with baggage, swayed less cumbersomely above the dust so scorching to the eyes.

Escorted by policemen with staffs, Saul lengthened his steps. Short, but impetuous and emphatic,[1] he advanced like Caesar, like a leader, with a bearing which would draw forward an entire army. Did he feel the sun beating against his head? This region of fire which he was traversing, this desert whose rocks seemed to vibrate beneath the blows of the sunlight, this mirage of vain splendours, hardly existed for his eyes. On descrying the walls of Damascus, did he remember that even at the time of Abraham this city, which was the home of Eliezer, had been one of the great caravansaries of the Orient? Perhaps; but one idea dominated him, fanatically sweeping away all thought of the remote past.

He knew that at Damascus a Nazarene church was scandalously and insolently spreading its corruption. From here it might swarm through Antioch as far as Cilicia. Saul was going to lay hold of it; he would uncover the names of the apostates; a letter sealed with the seal of Caiaphas gave him authority to seize them; he would bind them, and bring them back to Jerusalem, where the Sanhedrin would pass prompt and sovereign sentence upon their band.

Saul was happy; he was like a wild boar hurling himself against a hedge which he knew could not resist him. A furious gaiety quickened his pace. In his eyes was the

[1] There may be some accuracy in the description of Paul's personal appearance contained in Chapter III of the Apocryphal Acts of Paul: "a man small in stature, bald-headed, bow-legged, stout, close-browed, with a slightly prominent nose, full of grace."

ironic gleam of the conqueror at the moment when he has *caught* the enemy.

Suddenly, like a flash from this shadowless sky, a light struck him, hurling him to the ground. A distant and terrible voice, a commanding voice which rolled like thunder, called from on high, "Saul!" Then lower and much nearer, like a compassionate reproach, the voice repeated, "Saul!" And Saul, whose eyes were shrivelled with terror, opened them again and perceived some one standing on the road, surrounded by the light of glory. He was more than a man; he was the *Son of man,* whom Ezekiel and Daniel had seen, clothed in linen, his face brighter than lightnings and his arms like bronze heated to a white heat. But from his head, from the pierced palms of his hands, and from the luminous feet, there seemed to emanate tongues of vermilion flame; and he showed Saul the red wound of a lance-tip in his side.

Overwhelmed and prostrate, Saul hid his face full in the dust. He felt that should the Unknown become still more manifest, the vision would reduce him to ashes. But the Lord, with his eternal gentleness, leaned towards him, and deigned to interrogate him, to question him as to his *motives:*

"Why persecutest thou me?"

Saul did not answer: "In what have I persecuted thee? I knew thee not." In a flash of intuition, he felt who this Unknown was. While he lay on the ground, the light from without penetrated within. A breath of fire touched his lips and enabled him to speak. What would he answer! Would he cry out with pain and remorse? Not at all! He wished to *know,* and he asked, "Who art thou, Lord?"

Untold audacity! The non-existent asking the name of the Omnipotent. He was not willing to submit without good reasons. How thoroughly like Paul this was! The alertness of intelligence and will; the resistance of the ego to God himself! He would henceforth be his subject, since he called him Lord. But the Lord must confirm his identity. Like Jacob wrestling with the angel, Saul struggled until he had evidence of his defeat; and he would not admit himself vanquished merely because his master was the stronger. He must first understand.

The Unknown consented to name himself; he explained in the Aramaic tongue, with which both Jesus and Paul were familiar, "I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest."

Twice he proffered this mention of persecution. The Judge revealed himself in the condition of a victim; he accused and he forgave immeasurably. Of a sudden Saul perceived a truth which was to serve as the viaticum of his soul: the Christ and his disciples make but one. He was transpierced with remorse, yet animated by great hope. In a moment's time, something unutterable had overwhelmed him and transformed him. He had been all hatred—and was made all love. Beyond tangible images, the mystery was communicated to him. But this revelation did not annihilate him in ecstasy. He sprang up forthwith, prepared to act.

"What shall I do, Lord?" he asked with naïve obedience. The Lord said to him, "Arise and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do."

Saul arose, stunned, like a man in a stupor. The vision had vanished; and when he opened his eyes now, he saw

nothing. It seemed to him as though black scales were clinging to his eyeballs. He groped in the burning sunlight as if he were in darkness. Where were his companions? He called them, and thin voices answered him. Crouching with bowed heads, or prostrate and frozen with terror, these witnesses were awaiting they knew not what, perhaps death. The dreadful Light had also hurled them to the ground; they had heard the mutter of a voice. *Some one* had been there; but they had seen no one. This passing of the Invisible had frightened them more than a vision. They saw with alarm that their leader was *blind*. What angel, what spirit, had visited him? He held out his hand for them to lead him, like a child, like a captive, like one of those beggars with the dead eyes who are led through the streets of the city.

It is thus that Saul entered Damascus.

The apparition had lasted a few seconds. But this miracle was, and *is*, something more momentous than the creation of a universe. Nothing greater, except the Incarnation and the Resurrection of Christ, has happened in the history of man.

The Acts contain three different mentions of this incident. The divergencies among them, which negative critics have been so determined to magnify, revolve about minor details which are easily harmonized. In the first account "the men that journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but beholding no man." In the second *they see* the light, but do not catch the words. The third expands the words of Jesus. After "Why persecutest thou me?" it adds, "It is hard for thee to kick against the goad." And further on:

"For to this end have I appeared to thee, that I may

make thee a minister, and a witness of those things wherein I will appear to thee, delivering thee from the people and from the nations, unto which now I send thee, to open their eyes that they may be converted from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and a lot among the saints, by the faith that is in me."

In the third account Paul seems to combine the words which he heard on the road to Damascus with those which came to him from other revelations, or which were transmitted to him by Ananias.

The Epistles themselves make decisive allusions to the incident at Damascus. Paul must have told this story so many times orally that he felt no need of repeating it in his letters. Nevertheless, when he wrote to the Corinthians, "Am not I an apostle? Have not I seen Christ Jesus our Lord?" he clearly confirms the testimony of the Acts. He had seen the Lord, as the apostles saw him after the Resurrection, which is to say, with his wounds transfigured, and his human countenance glorified by the palpable presence of the divine. If Paul, who was last, the late comer, the one "born out of due time," [2] dared call himself an apostle, this was because Jesus had appeared before him in his human form.

Thus the historian must accept the authenticity of the fact as indubitable. But the sceptics and the Christian commentators will forever remain at odds in their explanations. The former, who do not acknowledge the Resurrection and who deny the divinity of Christ, consider that Paul was prey to an hallucination. It was a subjective experience which, in telling of it, he located

[2] The word which he uses is forceful, denoting the issue of a woman caused by the wound of abortion.

outside him: whereupon it became embodied in his faith. What rational system will account for this persistent illusion, the sincerity of which no one dares place in doubt?

"Baur, who devoted his life to the work of explaining the miracles of the Gospel, confesses that the conversion of Paul resists all historical, logical, or psychological analysis. In upholding a single miracle, he automatically admits them all. The central purpose of his life was unfulfilled." [3]

Holsten obstinately built up the series of deductions that must have prepared Paul for the miracle. A fixed idea had culminated in hallucination. It was sheer mathematics . . . His hypothesis not only contradicted every text; it outraged the potentialities of the interior mechanism. For no set of theorems will lead a man to a vision which he will believe in until his death.

Pfleiderer postulated two counter-tendencies in Saul's mind, the one arousing him against Christ, the other leading him towards Christ. One fine day, *without a vision*, the second is supposed to have prevailed.

Renan covered himself with ridicule in imagining that some physical disability was the determinant of the vision and of Paul's [4] transformation. Scorning the apostle's own assertions, he credits him with remorse and with doubts concerning the perfection of the Law.

M. Loisy recognizes that "modern criticism has

[3] Words pronounced at Baur's tomb by Landerer in 1860.

[4] "It would appear that he had inflammation of the eyes, perhaps incipient ophthalmia. . . . Perhaps also the sudden transition from the intense sunlight of the plain to the fresh shade of the gardens led to a paroxysm in the morbid and seriously shattered organism of the fanatical traveller. And he adds this gratuitous conjecture, contrary to the text, which mentions the "brightness of the sun," "It is not unlikely that a storm had burst suddenly."

striven in vain to discover any traces of an anterior psychological process in the account as given in the Acts." But because he in his turn wants to avoid the miraculous at all costs, he concocts a story of slight originality, a mixture of Holsten, Pfleiderer, and Renan, and beats about the bush without explaining anything at all: "Despite himself his mind was filled with the thought of this Christ whom he was attacking; and *one fine day,* in a mental crisis, he was *somehow* affected by an hallucination strong enough to disturb his reason and his will, and literally to subjugate him to the impressions of his dream. . . .

"The conversion following the vision seems to have been due to the feverish activity and agitation of his mind. Paul's faith had developed under passionate discussion. At the given moment it *bounded* in a manner which was not the logical consequence of observation and reflection, but a kind of revolution, a *leap* of mystical faith, occasioned by the man's *cerebral state,* and as closely related to psychiatry as to rational and moral psychology."

Like Renan, he credits Saul with "a certain lack of assurance in the Law, in its perfection, its moral efficacy, and its power of attracting the pagans."

Historically, these explanations contradict the Acts, which speak definitely of Saul as "breathing out threatening and slaughter." They contradict Paul's words to the Galatians stating that before the crisis of his conversion he was more jealously attached than ever to Pharisaic traditions.

Are they at least plausible, when measured by the potentialities of moral life? Leaving Christianity aside for the moment, we should have the extraordinary case

of a man highly antagonistic to something which he looks upon as a sinister error; and then, after accepting the task of exterminating it by the most ferocious methods, he suddenly embraces the very doctrine which he had despised; he preaches it with undeviating power, lucidity, and wisdom, and he dies to attest his faith in it; and this reversal of an entire life is produced in less than a minute, as the result of an hallucination.

The story, in such terms, seems extravagant and inconceivable.

The hallucination itself is not easy to establish. When such a phenomenon does occur, the imaginary picture is consistent with the previous trend of the imagination. Paul had pictured Jesus as a false prophet; he continued to execrate him, since he was rabid in his rôle as a persecutor. If the fixed idea of his hatred had provoked the vision, he would have seen Christ with despicable characteristics, and would have heard odious words. He would have resisted the imagined figure, instead of humbling himself and obeying.

Similarly, had he been assailed by regrets, he would have shoved them violently aside. A man of sound mind does not allow himself to be "subjugated" by an idea which he knows to be false. He reacts. Paul was by nature in a perpetual state of reaction. Did he once regret being a Christian? All the evidence indicates that a permanent revolution without relapse could only be the result of some external shock, some event of peremptory and unforgettable gravity.

Today the "mental transport" invented by Renan, and the claps of thunder which Saul is supposed to have mistaken for the voice of Christ, are sad-looking hypotheses. Renan at least understood that the impulse

would have to come from without. But when M. Loisy talks of the *leap,* the *bounding,* of the mystical faith, such sleight of hand reduces us to the bare discovery that Paul was converted because he was converted.

The wily mention of "psychiatry" suggests that Paul was half-mad and that his conversion was a kind of morbid crisis. But the magnificent poise of his thinking as a theologian and of his life as an apostle is enough to refute such a theory. The explanation of the supernatural in terms of pathology will always be the last refuge of scientists at bay.

How plausible is the supposition that his faith was developed under impassioned controversy? The contrary is practically certain. The more he waged war against the Galilean sect, the more firmly he believed it incompatible with all that he represented—just as M. Loisy turns his back with more and more hostility upon the faith, the farther entrenched he becomes in his destructive commentaries on the sacred texts. His determination to demolish the story in the Acts finally brings M. Loisy to the point of claiming that Paul's companions were a fiction.[5] He eliminates these embarrassing witnesses; as though people travelled without escort in the East, and particularly Paul, an official personage on a judicial mission that was expected to net him prisoners!

But let us turn from these trifles. The apparition of Damascus permits the negative critic but one attitude: humility in the face of the *unexplainable,* respect for powerful evidence which he will never be able to weaken. This miracle, this sudden total transformation of a soul, goes beyond the history of Paul; it dominates

[5] In general, M. Loisy does not appear to have much first-hand knowledge of the Orient; he reasons by deduction, or from books.

all times and places—the authentic sign of the pity of a God who is at pains to seek revolting mankind and arrest it in its flight.

All that the apostle could preach to Jews and to Gentiles—that is, to us—would issue from this undeniable experience: the Christ is risen; for I have beheld him even as I behold you.

III

SAUL'S VOCATION

At Damascus, Saul remained struck with blindness for three days. He neither ate nor drank.

Was it the dazzling Light that had stunned his eyes? We may imagine, rather, that his affliction left him with a palpable vestige of the divine Presence. He must have considered it only too just a punishment, and have wondered whether it would endure throughout his life. But just as he had submitted to the vision, though he might have resisted it to the end, so he accepted his humiliation as a lenient test. Had he not deserved that eternal death which is the lot of the ungodly? Like Israel, he had been a wretched *blind man*. What did his outward sight matter, now that the inner veil had been lifted! The eyes and voice of Christ, the glory of his person, remained deep within him, and consoled him for the lost world.

He fasted three days; though he must have been con-

sumed with thirst, not a drop of water moistened his lips. He prayed in silence. Three days and three nights, alone with the sublime lone image. Joy of knowing and loving; ecstatic possession of truth which had come to him unasked; regret that he had remained so long in abysmal error.

If Paul ever revealed the contents of his meditation, no one has repeated them. Certain passages in the Epistles aid us, in flashes, to follow the probable trend of his thoughts. He knew Christ, Lord of the living, master of death. The Son of God—because he was so—had taken "the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men . . . becoming obedient unto death, even to the death of the cross." And for the ungodly he was dead.

"*Scarce for a just man will one die,*" . . . Paul said to himself, "because when as yet we were sinners, Christ died for us . . . through whom we have now received the reconciliation."

If the Lord had loved him unto death, if he had shown himself to a wretch who had detested him, was this not done that Paul might cling with all his strength to the mystery of his Presence, and might imitate him like the believers whom Paul had persecuted? Paul swore to himself forthwith that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor might, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

But had those moments given him full knowledge of the whole truth? In another revelation, at Damascus, Jesus said to him, "For thou shalt be a witness for him unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard."

His "gospel" was developed by subsequent visions, by the knowledge of the faith which he derived from the company of the apostles themselves, by continuous inspiration and by his own experiences. For the time being, the knowledge of the essentials was enough for him; and why seek further proof, when he had seen with his own eyes?

On the other hand, had the thought of his errors filled him with pain? He had reviled and blasphemed the Holy One, and tortured those who loved him. Did he, like Peter, bemoan the enormous *offence* for which a whole lifetime could not atone? Some years later, he wrote to Timothy, "I obtained the mercy of God, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief."

He bowed in humility; but he was not the man to nurture his remorse for long. Remorse is the continuation of the past, and Paul was turning towards the future. He would simply praise God for the wonder worked in his ignorant heart. He was astounded to have become, at a single stroke, so simple. Everything in his life, even repentance, was simplified.

Yet one consideration must have tormented him, in so far as he remained a dialectician and a Jew jealous of traditions. He had considered the Law perfect, a golden rule without alloy, an eternal heritage. No innovator could be anything but an impostor; the disciples of Christ had incurred his hatred because he looked upon them as enemies of the Law. Henceforth, what would be the relation between the Law and his new faith? And what would remain of the mission of Israel, if the Jews persisted in denying the true Messiah?

Saul rehearsed in his memory the history of the chosen people. Before Moses had ascended Mount Sinai

to seek the eternal Law, a different code had governed the patriarchs. Abraham was not justified by the works which the Law imposed upon them; because he accepted the sign of the covenant, circumcision, after having believed in the *promise*. And he had been justified solely by this faith in the promise. Thus, the Law was not necessary to salvation?

Saul found it hard to belittle the Law; since it came from God, could God repudiate it? However, he remembered a saying of the Master's which was repeated by the believers in Christ, "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles."

A new covenant had been announced by the prophet; it was the law of "propitiation," the perfect remission of sin; and the new wine, the perfect libation, was the wine of the Redeemer. Henceforth, God no longer exacted the blood of goats and bullocks. Once for all, the Victim had purified all. But if the sacrifices were to end, the Temple would become almost defunct. The thought of the Temple's dying was repugnant to Saul; he planned that people should come there to worship God in spirit and in truth.

Would the Jews consent to this change? He considered the Sanhedrin's denunciations of Stephen; he recognized his own voice there; and the supplication of the martyr resounded in his ears, "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." Stephen had prayed for Saul; his death had been an act of intercession. Oh! if Saul in his turn might become anathema, *herem*, for his brethren, and wrest their salvation from God!

No, Israel would not be turned away. The gifts of the Lord are without repentance. Israel had held the divine words in trust, from Israel Christ had issued in

the flesh. Israel was not rejected, since Saul himself, the unworthy, the "one born out of due time," had obtained mercy.

Nevertheless, if the mass of the Jews scorned the gift of the Light—and Saul foresaw their impenitence—who would inherit their privileges? God was not solely the God of Israel; he had created, and he governed, all the nations. Abraham knew that in his seed they would be blessed. His seed was not all of Israel; it was the flower born by the "stem of Jesse," of whom Isaiah had said:

"Behold my servant whom I have chosen, my beloved (in whom my soul hath been well pleased) . . . He shall show judgment to the Gentiles. . . . The bruised reed he shall not break: and smoking flax he shall not extinguish. . . . And in his name the Gentiles shall hope."

The day had risen upon races who were beneath the shadow of death. The Son of God had not offered his blood for the Jews alone, but for all men. Henceforth all could sit at the table of the Father and together drink the juices of his vine.

The Twelve had heard the Master's injunction, "Go ye, and teach all nations." Philip, one of the Seven, had already baptized the Ethiopian eunuch, and Peter had ordered the baptism of Cornelius, a "centurion of the band called the Italian band."

Did Saul learn of this by revelation? In what measure was the definite purpose of his mission now manifest to him? No one could say. At least he knew that he had been predestined to lead the Gentiles into the Kingdom. In making himself the bondsman of his God, he amplified his future prodigiously. The immensity of his career spread out before him.

Why he and no other? The question, if it occurred to him, admitted of no answer. Why? "Hath not the potter power over the clay?" He had been chosen from his mother's womb, in order that God might show his compassion and his glory by transforming this vessel of ignominy into a "vessel of mercy." Saul understood that the singular and inexorable call would brook no resistance. And as confirmation of this, a person came to repeat to him the same words which he had heard in the darkness of his days of blindness.

There was at Damascus a certain Ananias, who is described in the Acts as a "disciple." He was doubtless one of the very men whom Saul, had he not been converted, would have taken into custody. The community at Damascus must already have been a large one, since otherwise it would not have been singled out for persecution. But it was composed mostly of Jews, who were quite numerous in this important trading centre; and although Ananias was baptized in Christ, he retained his connection with the synagogue—a pious man "according to the law," highly thought of among the Jews, one of those prudent, upright people who serve a great cause with discretion. In a dream Ananias had a vision wherein the Lord called him and commanded:

"Arise, and go into the street that is called Straight, and seek in the house of Judas one named Saul of Tarsus. For behold, he prayeth. And he saw a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hands upon him, that he might receive his sight."

Ananias objected:

"Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints in Jerusalem. And here

he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that invoke thy name."

But the Lord said to him:

"Go thy way; for this man is to me a vessel of election, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my sake."

Ananias went and entered the house, and laying his hands upon him, he said:

"Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus hath sent me, he hath appeared to thee in the way as thou camest; that thou mayest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost."

Immediately Saul felt as though scales were falling from his eyes, and he regained his sight forthwith. He arose and was baptized; "and when he had taken meat, he was strengthened."

The simplicity of this miraculous narrative permits us to understand the Lord's great vigilance in making his vocation clear to him. At the moment when Ananias heard the command to bring him baptism and the Holy Ghost, he himself *saw* the messenger arriving; and the simultaneity of the two visions shows that they really did come from on high.

A more definite revelation of his future seems to have followed the gift of the Holy Ghost. In a prophetic summary, Christ showed him the sufferings to which he was pledging himself; he understood now what his eyes as a Pharisee had found impenetrable, when he had read Isaiah's portrait of the man "acquainted with infirmity . . . as it were a leper" who "was offered because it was his own will . . . and as one struck by God and afflicted . . . wounded for our iniquities."

Saul knew now that Christ would let him drink a heavy draught of his cup. The repast at which he recovered his strength undoubtedly ended with the communion, and he commemorated the death of the Lord that he might share in it. Not a fanatical yearning for martyrdom, but acquiescence in martyrdom, must have been the seal of his initiation. He did not yet say, "To die is gain," but he could already proclaim, "For to me, to live is Christ."

Armed with this superhuman presence, he *rose up* for the conquest of the world. God was in him, he in God; who then would be against him?

IV

HIS FIRST STEPS AS AN APOSTLE

On approaching Saul, Ananias had called him "brother." The "saints" of Damascus received the neophyte with fraternal confidence. A convert always enjoys the privilege of being treated with deference; he is feasted like the unexpected guest or the prodigal son. Repentance and baptism obliterated all else that they had known of Saul. They cared to remember nothing now but the need of praising God for this miraculous change. His meeting with the Lord, which the disciples fully understood, proved the Resurrection by a different kind of evidence from that of the Twelve: involuntary evidence, supported by a state of blindness which had been cured by a second miracle following the double vision.

As positive in their thinking as the pagans, the Israelites needed such obvious dovetailing of evidence to overwhelm the carnal-minded. When they came near to

Saul, the Christians were made to feel by the ardour of his story that they were actually touching the Unseen Visitor. They could tell one another with greater assurance that Christ was with them, as he had promised, and that he would save his Church by those very men who had bound themselves to destroy it. Saul was a *trophy*. The keen-sighted already foresaw his future. This little man, built like an engine of war, had squandered his energies in combating the Truth—and he would now defend it with this same power, multiplied a hundredfold by the Holy Ghost. Furthermore, every one felt his leadership from the first: the violence of his new love spread like fire. He was scarcely baptized before he entered a synagogue and announced in his robust voice that Jesus was "the Son of God."

Despite the atrocious anger of the Jews, he would remain consistently faithful to the method which he inaugurated. He loved his brothers, the people of his own race; he desired their salvation before that of others; for it was to them that the Gospel had originally been offered. Thus, in every city he first tried to convert them.

Other motives led him to select the synagogues for his preaching. They were not solely halls of prayer for the circumcised Jews. At the hours of assembly the marble benches along the walls would be occupied by persons who were known as "those fearing God," pagans who had become disgusted with the idols and were attracted by the monotheism of Israel, the clarity of the decalogue, and the intransigent vigour of the Jewish principles. Saul thought of these proselytes, suspecting that it would be easier to convert them than the doctors.

These doctors must have shaken their heads at his very

first words, when he made the audacious suggestion that "Jesus is the Son of God." Did he bring forward nothing but the incident of the apparition to substantiate this? Surely he went to the Scriptures for proofs of the prophecies that orthodox theology could not challenge. We imagine him unrolling the book of the Psalms and reading the Psalm which begins, "The Lord said to my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand . . . before the day star I begot thee." And he did not forget the famous verse of Isaiah:

"For before the child know to call his father and his mother, the strength of Damascus, and the spoils of Samaria shall be taken away." The wise men had come from Arabia to offer the child-king the power of the Orient, its gold and perfumes. As Samaria meant the idolaters, this was the homage of the Gentiles, which Jesus had desired in his swaddling clothes; and Saul doubtlessly interpreted it as the promise of life held out to all men of uprightness.

However, we should wish to know whether he broached so early the decisive question as to what external conditions were required for the Gentiles to be sanctified. Must they first undergo the Jewish initiation, obeying the Law in every detail, or could they enter the Church by simple baptism? The young Christian sect would soon confront alternatives which would vitally affect its future. Saul had not yet had experience enough to choose between them. His native discipline would have inclined him to conclude that the Law, with the rigour of its precepts, should remain the buttress of the new Temple, or at least its entrance.

Paul always defended himself against the charge of aiming to abolish the Law. He advised Timothy to be

circumcised. He took the vow of the Nazarites; and like an exemplary Jew, he fulfilled the obligations of these devout observances.

Nevertheless, he proclaimed that the Law and its works were powerless to justify without the faith in Jesus Christ. In later years he urgently exhorted the congregation of Jerusalem to simplify the Mosaic restrictions that were still in force.

He should not be accused of self-contradiction. Divine inspiration gave practical pliancy to the natural inflexibility of his principles. At the very beginning of his apostleship, Paul had conceived the broad outlines of the doctrine which he was to call his "gospel": baptized Gentiles are the equals of the Jews in the Church; every Christian, even if born a Jew, is free with regard to the Law; all the saints compose but one single mystical body in Christ and with Christ.

Did he go from synagogue to synagogue in Damascus proclaiming such bold doctrines? The Acts say nothing of this. His preaching always seems to have caused great surprise. "How! This man was persecuting the Nazarene sect, and he now asserts that Jesus was the Messiah!"

At first they listened to him out of curiosity. But the fanatics of Israel grew apprehensive. Saul was judged an apostate, as he had judged the disciples of Christ. His case seemed worse, since it was a kind of official treason. What now! The Sanhedrin had commissioned him to track down certain dangerous heretics, and he had become the messenger of their apostasy! It was absurd and scandalous!

The doctors of the city attacked him furiously; he held his ground. Resistance aroused his energies, as a stone blocking a torrent causes the water to leap above

it. He scouted their objections. In exasperation they plotted violence against him. He did not fly in the face of this mortal danger. After a few days, he departed.

He himself has recalled that he took the road through the desert. "I went into Arabia." These words cover a period of three years. They are not much. Why did he go to Arabia?

It has been supposed that, like Moses, he meditated in solitude. Saul, at the foot of Sinai, reflecting on the old and new covenants—it would make a fine theme for romantic amplification. Once he speaks of Sinai, but in a purely allegorical sense, "Sinai is a mountain in Arabia, which hath affinity to that Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children." There is nothing to prove that he lived there. Assuredly, he would find the silence of those houseless, trackless regions priceless during hours of contemplation. But the desert, like the sea, could not hold him for long. In this respect, as in many others, he differed from the prophets prior to Christ. The figures of speech that naturally occur to him are the metaphors of a city-dweller, a socially-minded man who takes pleasure in the sight of masons carving stones, or armed cohorts filing past, even athletes racing in the stadium, a man who knows the value of economy and of trade.

Christ had chosen him to carry his name to all peoples. Apparently he attempted to implant the Gospel at Petra or among the mountaineers of the Hauran. Furthermore, Jewish colonies were plentiful in a country traversed by the routes of the remotest caravans, and affording access to the rugs of Persia and the pearls of India. He never mentions this mission, probably because it led to no permanent results. Similarly, he says nothing of

his voyage to Cyprus, since he had entrusted Barnabas with the care of the church which they founded there.

With his magnificent assurance, he returned to Damascus, as he later came back to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, after he had been driven from all these cities and stoned at Lystra.

It is surmised that the heads of the synagogues at Damascus had reported his defection to the great Sanhedrin and the chief priests of Jerusalem. They could only give instructions that the traitor be apprehended and brought to their tribunal, where he would receive punishment for his offence.

But Saul was then far from Damascus; and by the time he returned, Rome had again seized the reins of the Orient with a firm hand. Being a Roman citizen, he was protected against arbitrary arrest, and even against expulsion. As a way of getting rid of him, the Jews plotted to assassinate him. He learned of this, hid, prepared to flee. In order to make escape impossible, the Jews obtained the complicity of the ethnarch, an officer who was in the service of the Arab king Aretas and upon whom devolved the policing of the city. The ethnarch ordered all the gates to be guarded by soldiers.

The "disciples" arranged an adventurous plan for Saul's escape. One of them in a suburb had a house with windows overhanging the wall, and they let him down from there in the dead of night, in a round wicker basket such as is used for holding bread or fish. Paul later commemorated this flight by praising the Lord for having shielded him from the dagger of his enemies. A boldness that would seem excessive, if the Spirit had not directed his footsteps, led him to Jerusalem, where other ambuscades were in store for him.

He felt a great desire to see and question Peter, the first of the Twelve. He also wanted to know John and James, the kinsmen of the Lord—all three of the men "who were reputed to be pillars."

This visit to the holy city was to be one of the convert's severest trials. At first the Jews do not appear to have molested him. Three years after the event at Damascus, the Jewish persecution was over. Rome forbade the Sanhedrin all tyrannical violence. Despite his prerogatives as a Roman citizen, Saul was exposing himself to reprisals. But a bitter humiliation awaited him. He tried to enter into relations with the disciples, to "join himself" to them, as the narrator says simply. They were afraid of him, "not believing that he was a disciple." The miracle of his conversion had occurred at a great distance; when it was mentioned, they shook their heads. The "Judaizers" among the Christians must have known that it was his avowed purpose to secure for the baptized Gentiles the same ranking in the Church as the Jewish-born Christians. He incurred malice and suspicion. Nothing could be harder for Saul than to feel that his loyalty and the evidence of the divine fact were doubted.

The Twelve held aloof from him, with a caution proper to leaders. But Saul approached Barnabas, a man like himself of enterprising and generous character. They fraternized immediately. Barnabas believed in the miracle, and in Saul's inspiration. He foresaw the future of such a companion; and putting his hand in his, he took him to the other apostles. Prodigious meeting of Paul and Peter, heroes who were destined to conquer the world by the crossing of two staffs!

Saul recounted how the Lord had shown himself on

the highway and had addressed him; then he told of boldly entering the synagogues of Damascus and proclaiming Jesus the Son of God. Peter, James and John were astonished at his story. Saul's enthusiasm, his radiant power of persuasion, transported them. In a moment he became their friend. They went with him through the streets of Jerusalem. Saul visited the places where the sufferings of Christ had been enacted. His questions concerning Christ were answered by men who had eaten and drunk in his company after the Resurrection.

He compared their apostolic principles with his own. Peter, it seems, had not yet seen the vision of Joppa; as a good Jew, he believed that he should abstain from unclean foods; he shared the national bias on the subject of idolaters; he found it difficult not to distinguish between circumcised Christians and baptized pagans. Nevertheless, he admitted that the gift of repentance and justice belonged to all.

Saul undertook to make him broaden his views. On the other hand, the apostle gave him a fuller knowledge of evangelical traditions. Many things had been revealed to him by the Lord himself.[1] But the present conversations brought up numerous questions as to how the dogmas should be interpreted and the sacraments administered.

At Jerusalem, Saul again found himself face to face with people who had known him before his conversion, and principally the Hellenist Jews: Cilicians, Syrians, Cyrenians. He began arguing with them; he wanted

[1] I Cor. XI, 23: "For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, This is my body, which is for you: this do in remembrance of me."

to show them that the Messiah had come, that *all men* were called to salvation. They were annoyed by this doctrine, which outraged Jewish pride. Saul was becoming a public menace; they wanted to get him out of the way; and as at Damascus, they resolved to exterminate him.

Saul was warned, but he was unwilling to take flight. Despite the imbecile persistence of his enemies and the obstinate distrust of the Judaizers, he desired to work for the redemption of his brothers. But a vision altered his plans. As he was praying in the Temple, a state of ecstasy came over him, and Jesus appeared, saying:

"Make haste, and get thee quickly out of Jerusalem; because they will not receive thy testimony concerning me."

Saul protested against this disappointing injunction:

"Lord, they know that I cast into prison, and beat in every synagogue, them that believed in thee. And when the blood of Stephen thy witness was shed, I stood by and consented and kept the garments of them that killed him."

(Thus he was implying that his testimony would have more weight with them than any other.) But Jesus repeated to him:

"Go, for unto the Gentiles afar off will I send thee."

This vision, like all the others we know in the life of Saint Paul, bears the unmistakable mark of being totally involuntary. He never sought for revelations. They came of themselves unexpectedly, when he needed enlightenment or comfort; and only their *intellectual* element remained with him. He was not a visionary like Ezekiel or John; it would be hard to imagine him dictating the Revelation, for his genius had slight con-

cern with apocalyptic images. In his previsions concerning the end of time, he refers to a previous oral catechizing, and is content with general allusions to the approaching Advent. He assuredly desired the return of Christ in his glory, as all the disciples hoped for it, and as we ourselves must hope for it. The words "*Come, Lord*" represent the height of Christian expectations.[2] When Paul disclosed the references to Jesus in texts of the prophets which picture the Messiah in humiliation and triumph, he was assailing the Jews with the same argument as Tertullian would use against them. They must conceive of two comings of Christ. The first time, he appeared in the form of the Victim. But it was written that he would return, with legions of angels, in the splendour of fire and the blare of trumpets, riding in the majesty of the clouds.

Meanwhile the apostle possessed the mystic presence, the intimacy of the Spirit; and at times he was "caught up into Paradise," where he "heard unspeakable words which it is not lawful for a man to utter." At the decisive turning-points of his career, he heard a voice that uplifted and strengthened him.

His first vision at Jerusalem clarified the disposition of his future: Peter should have charge of the churches that were Jewish by origin; and to him would fall the inferior, humbler task, the care of the uncircumcised. Thus, he later wrote to the Galatians that he had left Jerusalem "unknown by face to the churches of Judea, which were in Christ: But they had heard only: He, who persecuted us in times past, doth now preach the

[2] The two Aramaic words which were repeated by the Christian congregations, *Maran Atha*, expressed this expectation. The words meant: Come, Lord: or: I will come soon.

faith which once he impugned: And they glorified God in me."

Astounding fact! The apostles had surely told him the famous parables in which Jesus announced the fall of Israel: the parable of the vineyard which was let out to other husbandmen, when the son of the lord was sent to them and the vine-dressers had killed him; and the parable of the guest at the wedding, who was bound hand and foot and cast "out into the outer darkness," while the people of the highways came to take their place in the banquet-hall. He knew the prophecies concerning the destruction of the Temple and the downfall of Jerusalem. In his Epistles he never refers to these well-known passages. He recalls the rite of the eucharist, because it had been taught him by the Lord himself.

He would not repeat matters of common knowledge; he would confine his mission to his "gospel," to the truths which he learned by direct revelation, though not without submitting them to the judgment of those "who were reputed to be pillars."

He had stayed in Jerusalem with Cephas only fifteen days. On his departure, Christians accompanied him as far as Caesarea, through fear that he might be attacked on the road. He embarked there for Syria, and reached Tarsus, the city of his childhood. What would he do here? As in Arabia, we again lose accurate trace of his movements. His life was like one of those rivers that sink beneath the surface at intervals and emerge again. But even when one cannot follow it, one can imagine the power and murmur of the current underground—and when it again comes forth into the broad daylight, we find it broader and more amply fertile.

V

AT TARSUS. THE YEARS OF OBSCURITY

In the courtyard of a house at Tarsus, sheltered beneath an overhanging roof, there is an ancient well with a low rim of marble, grooved by the cord. The water from this well is of exquisite sweetness. It is called the well of Saint Paul, because there was once taken from it a basaltic stone on which was carved in Greek the name *Paulos*. There is no evidence that this well was ever really connected with the history of Paul. Yet it agreeably suggests the fresh shadows of mysterious uneventful years when he lived in and about the city of his fathers, perhaps dwelling as an anchorite in a mountain grotto, silently drinking at the founts of eternal Wisdom, and sometimes coming down to men, in order that his brethren might share in the riches he was amassing.

All founders of lofty enterprises have passed through periods of meditation. Jesus had had good reason for

setting his disciples the example of retiring at night to a hill and watching there in prayer. Paul's ecstasy at Jerusalem came over him while he prayed; and later, this ever-active hero would enjoin the Thessalonians, "Pray without ceasing."

It is superfluous to ask whether his retreat at Tarsus was spent in other ways than praying, meditating, and studying the message of the new times in the light of the Scriptures. If he preached—and could he wholly refrain from preaching?—it was as man to man, among the people of his own kin. He does not seem to have established a church in his native city. The Epistles do not once mention Tarsus. Like the others, he was not a prophet in his own country.

Did he voluntarily prolong this interval? Or was it imposed upon him as a period of trial by the master whom he obeyed like a slave? Would that we could divine the workings of his mind, the mystic unfolding of the doctrine within him!

Those historians who make great efforts to Hellenize him have claimed that while he was at Tarsus he was studying the mysteries and philosophies of Hellas in order to include them in his theology. According to Loisy, "the idea of a God dying for all men's salvation was contained in the mysteries." Paul is supposed to have adapted it to the simplified, universalized Jewish theodicy.

Such a conjecture is refuted by the origins of Paul's faith: he believed in Jesus the Redeemer because he had seen him; he had not constructed a figure in his dreams, and surrounded it with a personal system. He was reflecting on realities that he had remembered, not made.

He knew that the fall of Adam had transmitted a

principle of death. This was no invention of his own; he had not derived it from Greek myths; but he had the support of the Jewish tradition, with the Psalmist lamenting, "In sin did my mother conceive me."

He also knew, after his conversion, that Christ had become "the likeness of sinful flesh and of sin," to atone for the offences of all mankind; being the Son of God, he had triumphed over death; and he had taken the form of a slave that he might deify us in him. Paul discovered the logical connection between sin and its remission. He explained to himself, in so far as this was possible, the magnificence of the divine plan.

Thus his ideas on the Redemption did not come to him from the mysteries. It is doubtful whether he knew of them, except by hearsay. He would not have studied the rites of Dionysus, Isis, and Mithra, because they were daemonic systems of idolatry that filled him with horror. Their influence on his thinking was nil. He never denounced them by name. But they shared in the general repugnance which he felt for all the heathen cults:

"And they [the Gentiles] changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the likeness of the image of a corruptible man, and of birds, and of fourfold beasts, and of creeping things."

He was bound to abominate them, like magic and all attempts to seek the divine by devious or erroneous ways. And we know what he thought of magic. At Cyprus he was so enraged with the magician Elymas that he struck him blind as a sign of chastisement. At Ephesus he commended the Christians who had burned all the books of the occult sciences before the congregation of the brethren.

Now magic and the mysteries were linked together

by immemorial ties. Both were based upon the same conviction: *what the word announces, it brings to pass.* When the *mystes* of Eleusis was permitted to behold, in sudden brightness, the green stalk of sacred corn while uttering the formula "Hail, light!" he believed that he was aiding those life-processes which quicken beneath the sun of springtime; or he imagined that this rite was lifting him out of the darkness of the depths into the region of undying bliss.

The myths and the liturgies of the mysteries bore only the faintest resemblance to the Christian dogmas and rites. Some slight awareness of the Invisible, some desire for blessedness, were submerged beneath confused symbols and rites that were bloody or obscene. The apologists—such as Justin—were to see in them a dupery invented by the spirit of evil.

The Orphic myth of Zagreus was not at all analogous to the redemptive sacrifice or the eucharistic union. The child Zagreus takes the form of a bull to escape the violence of the Titans. The Titans cut him into pieces, cook the different parts of his body and devour them. But the heart eludes them. Athene, the sister of Zagreus, carries it to Zeus. He eats it; and Zagreus, thus absorbed, is reborn as Dionysus. Then Zeus punishes the Titans, hurling his bolts down upon them—and from their ashes arise the men who bear the penalty for the crime of their ancestors. If they wish to be free of the original transgression, they must purify themselves in the mysteries.

We should observe that Zagreus does not die to save the world; he succumbs *despite himself*. His rebirth, after his heart is devoured by Zeus, is one of those wild Greek conceptions which a Jew would have found

ridiculous. And the initiate is by no means saved through the merits of the god, in uniting himself with his sufferings and his resurrection.

The Orphics postulated a radical contradiction between matter and mind. They also looked upon the body as a gaol from which the soul gradually disengages itself. According to them, the soul and the body were united purely as expiation for an offence committed in a previous life. We become holy by liberating the divine element within us. Thus, one must refrain from all contact with carnal things, never eating the flesh of animals, or touching corpses, or attending weddings, and relieving the uncleanliness of the body by baths and aspersions. Their purity remained negative and primarily *physical*, like their hopes of happiness in the future life, where, by an inconsistency easy to understand, they desired nothing but perpetual banqueting, dancing and singing on the Elysian plains.

In the last analysis pagan mysticism was bound to the earth. Like all religions, it aimed to unite man with the divinity. But this divinity was merely the sum total of natural forces. Even the God of the Stoics is identical with the great All. The soul, which is a portion of the creative fire, will return to its principle and there lose itself.

When the desired union did not culminate in this pantheistic consummation, it confined itself to an effort to gain control over some occult power. When the high priest of Mithra in his pontifical robes descended into the trench, beneath the downpour of blood from the slaughtered bull, sprinkling it on his cheeks and eyelids, and opening his lips to gorge himself on the black liquid and to drink it in with avidity, he believed that the god

was concealed in the blood of the victim, and came down into his veins and filled him with a superhuman power. By his prayers earth and animals would be fecundated, and he himself would receive the gift of immortality.

Can this baptism of Mithra be compared to the Christian baptism derived from the baptismal rites practised by the Jews? Merely because the baptized speak of themselves as the enlightened, as in the Orphic initiation, is it permissible to infer that the Church borrowed even this metaphor from Orphism? The baptism of the initiates of Isis, which Apuleius describes in the eleventh book of the Metamorphoses, was administered in the public baths, and had only the value of an exterior rite. The litanies sung in honour of the goddess glorified her as the pre-eminent deity who absorbed in the one form the attributes of all others; but Isis represents omnipotent nature, not an infinite personal God who had voluntarily created the universe and made man in his image. Isis does not love her believers, does not suffer with them or for them.

Why should Paul have looked to the mysteries for doctrines or ceremonies, when Christ Jesus had revealed to him the light of the faith, the charismata, and the virtue of the sacraments? If we grant that he had heard the account of the death and resurrection of the god Osiris, this symbolic myth would merely have caused him to shrug his shoulders. But if a devotee of the Egyptian god had compared the life of the risen Christ to the rebirth of his idol, the apostle would doubtless have embarrassed him with the question:

What part do you share in the sufferings and second life of your deity?

"None," the pagan would have answered. "Osiris rejoices in his glory and has no further need of us."

Then what was there in common between Osiris and Jesus, "who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For in him were all things created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible. . . . For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him should all the fulness dwell; and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross. . . . Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."

Likewise, if a *mystes* of Eleusis had boasted to him of his abstinence, he would have replied with his paradoxical gruffness:

"Handle not, nor taste, nor touch (all which things are to perish with the using), after the precepts and doctrines of men. Which things have indeed a show of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and severity to the body; but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh." [1]

But if the same initiate, having heard that the Christians drank together the cup of the mystic blood and broke the body of their God, had dared to name the liturgical communion where the devotees exalted themselves by partaking of water, barley meal, and mint, the saint would have given this blind man one look of pain while murmuring the eucharistic prayer, "We bear thee thanks, O our Father, for the sacred vine of David thy servitor, which thou hast made us to know through

[1] By "indulgence of the flesh" he means the satisfaction of a totally superficial kind of piety.

Jesus thy Son. Glory to thee throughout the ages."

The Epistles admit certain terms like the word "mystery," certain images which had a definite meaning for the initiated. When Paul said that the Father "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love," he was using a figure which seemed to designate the contrast between the region of Hades and the brightness of the living. But he imparts new meaning to figures that are popular and universal, making them refer to divine certitudes, to the anticipation of truths that are substantiated by the evidence of visions and miracles.

The mysteries have impeded rather than accelerated the world's conversion to the spirit of Christ. The stirrings of religion were misled by a specious mysticism whose adepts readily obtained salvation by such external ceremonies or purifications as suffice for the followers of Mohammed. Each *thiasos,* or brotherhood of initiates, when penetrated by Christian propaganda, tended to become a charitable community. But whenever they resisted the faith, their opposition was firmer than that of most idolaters, who were indifferent to the ancient gods. Why should the worshippers of Isis have abandoned their happy goddess for the cult of a crucified man whose one heritage to his followers wishing to merit the crown was the wood of his gallows? Heathens who are spiritists and theosophers are hardest to turn towards the Redeemer, because they have already a semblance of supernatural life.

Even in the interest of the Gospel Paul would not take advantage of superficial affinities which he knew to be false and sacrilegious. He had obtained the freedom

of the children of light. Should he then subject himself to what he called "the rudiments of the world"?

He maintained the same independence and superiority where philosophy was concerned. We need attach no importance to certain expressions borrowed from Plato and Aristotle, a passage from Cleanthes quoted to the Athenians, and some controversial elements in which the Stoic diatribe is recognizable. On the streets, under the porticos, at the entrances of the schools, he had met with disputants, missionaries with packs, staff in hand, advancing in their sombre mantles, with heavy beards and long hair grey with dust. He had heard them state their theories, and more than once he had refuted their vain wisdom. To him these apostles of falsehood seemed more dangerous than idolatrous fanatics, because they flattered the pride of the weak, giving them the illusion of faultlessness and justice.

He was certain to despise the God of the Stoics, the god who, after creating destiny, had become subordinate to it, a god to whom the philosophers attributed the all-encompassing form of a sphere. A *ball-god;* the idea made Paul feel like laughing. What possible place of meeting could there be between a doctrine affirming that "man is good by nature; our vices are not born with us; they are purely a matter of false thinking," and the dogma of original sin, the belief in a God free and distinct from the world, who has predestined us to love him, who loves us beyond measure, and whose *grace* assists our will, powerless in itself, to gain salvation?

Nevertheless, at the time of Paul, Christians and Stoics did approach each other on the score of negations: both scorned loose pleasures and cupidities; their courage defied trials or tortures. But even in this, their principles

and their attitudes were clearly at variance. The Stoic acted as though man were alone, as though he himself were God. His gospel commanded him to know, to be intelligent. He took upon himself the mission of teaching the rest of mankind what they should or should not do. Natural reason was the only principle of guidance that he obeyed and commended to others. He praised the freedom of his ego, which remained intrepid under the blows of fortune; he braved injustice and tyranny. With him, lovingkindness and devotion assumed a doctrinary character; he wanted to serve as an example for others, resembling a sentence engraved on a column of bronze. He situated peace and justice within himself; and his own strength of character was deemed enough to establish him in absolute goodness.

The Christian, on the contrary, was primarily in search of God and his Kingdom. He was humble in confronting the divine example, and strong because the Omnipotent endowed him with his power. He had no desire for knowledge in itself, for the sterile pleasures of the intellect; he wanted understanding, that he might immerse himself wholly in the one God. He received this understanding in all its fulness and assurance, not by its own self-sufficiency, but either directly from the Holy Ghost or through the traditional revelations. Instead of glorifying his own person, he sacrificed himself to swell the number of the chosen. The cold solidarity of Stoicism must have seemed to him like a reflection of the lifeless moon upon the snow. He offered the world more than an intellectual system, more than a doctrine of love among mankind; in eliminating the powers of evil, he was re-making the *unity of the Kingdom of God*.

A river of life was bearing the young human bark upon its waters. All that was left behind along the shores no longer counted. "Where is the wise?" Paul exclaimed. "Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world?" As he proceeded on his way, these people were to him but the blind and the leaders of the blind. As the heir to priceless treasures, he would not borrow the rags of beggars. When he found some old, promising truths in their possession, he took them without further ado, as though recovering his own property.

If past systems did attract him during his years at Tarsus, it was not the pagan philosophy that disquieted him, but the recollections of his childhood, of his former position among his own people. We may imagine that he saw again the house of his birth, and perhaps his old mother or father, whom he has never mentioned. Perhaps he kissed the beard of a grandparent. The stool that he once sat upon awaited him. If he arrived on the evening of the Sabbath, the lamps of ritual oil were burning in the big room. The chest, with the scrolls of the Law arranged in their covers, stood open in front of him. At table he recited the benedictions over the legal foods. But he must have felt strange among his own people; their silence must even have conveyed to him the rebuke of Justin's Dialogue:

"Saul, you are no longer one of us. You have become the disciple of *worthless* men. Have you forgotten the words of Moses: 'Cursed be he that abideth not in the words of this law'? The Crucified, whom you say to be the Christ, is powerless; he is not the Christ; Elias has not come to anoint him and reveal him. First show us that he is risen from the dead. There is but one God; you will never cause us to believe that there are three."

Saul recounted the miraculous story of the apparition. They looked at him in stupefaction. But while he was explaining the law of the Christ whose blood has redeemed even the *goim*, they were overcome with sadness. The dreams of the prodigal son seemed to them like treason. And doubtless some one asked him:

"Then unless we believe in your Christ, we will not be given the slightest heritage on the mountain of the Lord? Leave us in peace. The Law is holy; no one who observes it and fears the Lord will be confounded."

Saul showed them that Abraham, Isaac, Noah, and Job were saved without knowledge of the Law. Thus it was not necessary. A new law abrogates an old law; one covenant annuls another. Henceforth the second circumcision, the circumcision of the heart, would suffice —and the first was useless. More than the eating of unleavened bread was required to fulfil the will of God. What good was it to know that the oblations contained so many measures of wheat and so many measures of oil, if one did not love with all his might the beloved Son of the Father, who had offered himself in keeping with the promise?

It is most likely that the friends and kinsmen of Saul remained unsympathetic to his teachings, and that he won few disciples in Tarsus. He left, hoping that some day they would understand the prophecy:

"Behold the king will come to thee, the just and saviour; he is poor, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

The ass was Israel; the colt that followed it represented the Gentiles. Thus Israel would not be damned, since the Lord, on the day of his triumph, has chosen it for his mount, his mount of good-will.

He retired to the solitude of the mountain, perhaps to the very grotto which tradition ascribes as his refuge, until the time when Barnabas came from Antioch to seek him, and having found him, led him away to their joint tasks.

VI

THE GREAT DEPARTURE

UNWITTINGLY Saul the persecutor had founded the community of Antioch. In driving the Nazarene Hellenists out of Palestine, he had precipitated a great diffusion of the sect. The exiles set about to convert first the Jews, then the pagans, "those fearing God." Was the observance of the Jewish practices, and especially circumcision, required of these? The contrary is probable. When Philip had baptized the Ethiopian eunuch on the road to Gaza, he had made but one stipulation: the man should believe with all his heart "that Jesus is the Son of God." Here already was the Pauline method. Paul was not to have the privilege of inaugurating it; but he was to champion it as the way of assuring the faith the kingdom of the universe.

Antioch, next to Samaria and Damascus, was the outpost of the Gospel. Thessalonica, Corinth, and Ephesus —all cities where powerful churches were later to be

established—were cosmopolitan centres with a population of Jews, Greeks, Syrians, Phoenicians, and Romans. In a small-town, provincial environment, changes in social or religious customs are difficult; the tribe, the homogeneous clan, will not tolerate dissent. But in a city of five hundred thousand inhabitants, new currents may arise without the general populace's even taking notice of them. The racial confusion and the presence of countless foreigners stimulate the movement of ideas. The more sensitive feel repelled by the extreme corruption, and are prepared for the rigours of asceticism.

Today Antioch is but a sub-prefecture. Ten minarets rise above the grey houses at the foot of the arid Silpius, facing the Amanus, which shuts in the horizon like the firm outline of a citadel. The yellowish Orontes extends its muddy waters back among savage hills that have been shaken by earthquake. Its orchards, and its pebbly islets with their tufted poplars, recall the islands of the Rhone in Provence, and infuse a little freshness into the austere landscape. The town is approached by a very ancient bridge with low narrow arches of loose stone; there was a similar one in the time of Paul and Barnabas. The mountain is riddled with caverns that were once the cells of hermits or proscribed Christians. But down below, among the olive trees, there are the remains of a paved road, a league in length, with colonnades along its edges, forming an opulent and salubrious passageway through a region where the tempests are terrific. As at Ephesus, the circle of an amphitheatre halfway up the hill still gives evidence of its past grandeur and magnificence. Gigantic statues of the Dioscuri holding their rearing horses were erected here by Tiberius. A temple of Zeus Keraunos protected the Acropolis and the city

against lightning, and there was a Pantheon for all the gods.

As at Tarsus, food was brought to Antioch by sea from Egypt and all the Mediterranean countries. Caravans came from the shores of the Euphrates, bearing the riches of upper Asia. It was a centre of pleasure, giddy but refined, and rampant with magic. Under Tiberius it was considered the third city in importance in the Roman world. The legate of Syria had his general headquarters there. The Israelite traders and the Greeks, who were very numerous and active, held a leading position in the metropolis.

The Hellenist disciples from Cyrenaica and Cyprus, who undertook the conversion of Antioch, naturally addressed themselves to the Greeks. It is for this reason that they and their followers were called by a Greek name: the Christians. Did unbelievers use this word "Christianoi" with a touch of irony? It is probable. Some opprobrium has always been attached to the glory of the Cross.

In any case, the Christian community at Antioch soon gave such abundant promise that it was discussed at Jerusalem; the leaders and elders of the mother-church decided that they would send Barnabas to examine the spirit of the new community, and, if he thought it good, to confirm it in its zeal.

Barnabas was an admirable missionary. His breadth of views, his prophetic ardour and authoritative manner, impressed the Hellenes, who were readily moved to enthusiasm, and who conceived of the supernatural in the generous terms of moral grandeur. He must have been, even physically, very handsome. Being a Levite, he belonged to the sacerdotal caste, to which none but

men of pure beauty were admitted. We know that he was a native of Cyprus. And even at the present time Cyprus or the near-by islands mark the birthplace of those Greek priests with the symmetrical features who resemble a Byzantine Christ, and who, as they officiate in their interminable liturgies, seem to have been taken from some solemn fresco. Later, when he had healed the lame man at Lystra, his noble bearing and commanding voice led the multitude to believe that they were beholding Zeus himself. He had owned an estate near Jerusalem, but he sold this and laid the money at the feet of the apostles. They put high hopes in him. His real name was Joseph, but he had been surnamed Bar-nabas, the "son of the prophecy," or the "son of the exhortation," for in the apostolic church the function of prophet involved more than the gift of foreseeing the future; his mission was to bring "edification, and comfort, and consolation." And the Holy Ghost which inspired him had made him a prophet in this sense—had given him, that is, the power of interpreting the Word.

His preaching had an important effect upon the growth of the church at Antioch. Though we do not know the exact extent of his influence, since the author of the Acts, with his usual indifference to numbers, is content to say that "a great multitude was added to the Lord." But Barnabas felt that he was not competent to govern its development unassisted. Perhaps the circumcised believers were already disturbed to see themselves outnumbered by the baptized pagans, the Greeks and Syrians. They may have been indignant and rebellious at the fact that no distinction was made between the two classes. Barnabas decided that Saul should join him. He had learned at Jerusalem what sort of man this was

whom the Spirit had reserved for him; Saul obeyed the same code as he, and would spare the pagan catechumens everything in the Mosaic Law which annoyed them needlessly.

Barnabas knew of Saul's retreat to Tarsus, where the apostle was in meditation, awaiting *his day*, and watchful lest he might "run in vain." He had been informed that Saul had retired into solitude, in accordance with the wishes of God. He decided to go personally in search of him.[1] A three days' march separated Tarsus from Antioch. He discovered Saul, not without difficulty, and induced him to accompany him. Paul asked for nothing better than to launch himself on a career. "Woe is unto me," he exclaimed later, "if I preach not the gospel."

A man who was unbalanced or was suffering under hallucinations would have been boastful of his gospel and would have insisted upon the right to spread it as he saw fit, with God alone as judge of his mission. Though Paul had been instructed by a secret voice, he would never admit that any church could be called Paul's.

This obedience in the unity of Christ was more deserving in him than in any other; he had been the last to come, but he had received more from on high than

[1] Renan arbitrarily and unjustly interprets both Paul's isolation and the decision of Barnabas. "Paul was at Tarsus, in a state of repose which must have been a torment to so active a man. Barnabas knew how to make proper use of these energies which were being wasted in unhealthy and perilous solitude. . . . To win over this great retractile, susceptible soul, to submit to the weaknesses and caprices of a man who was full of fire but very personal—that is what Barnabas did for Saint Paul. The major part of Paul's glory is due to the modest man who preceded him in everything, and effaced himself before him . . . more than once preventing his deficiencies from spoiling everything and the narrow ideas of others from throwing him into revolt."

any one else. His ardour and originality naturally inclined him to act with abrupt independence. The abnegation common to all the apostles was an essential condition of their success, and provided one of the strongest evidences of their truthfulness.

Arriving at Antioch like the workman of the second hour, instead of beginning separate activities, Paul fraternally assisted Barnabas. They "taught" for a year, enlisting and, what was more difficult, retaining under the discipline of the Cross, these Syrians, who were receptive but were also so voluptuous, unstable and covetous.

Were there Romans who entered the street, near the temple of all the gods, to hear Paul revealing the one God? His audiences were undoubtedly composed of some disabused idolaters and "those fearing God," the pagans who had one foot in the synagogue but had not yet decided to become proselytes. Their position was indeterminate, and socially untenable. But now the door of the faith was opened to these wavering souls, who found a haven of certainty and an ineffable spirit of brotherhood among the Christians.

No personal details concerning Paul's apostleship at Antioch have come down to us. In any case, he must have set to work with remarkable cheerfulness. The times of salvation were about to begin; the Church, without denying the synagogue, was no longer within the synagogue; the disciples of the Nazarene called themselves *Christians;* and this word, which was Hebrew in meaning but Hellenic and Latin in form, implied a promise of universality; it marked both Occident and Orient with the seal of the vanquishing tetragrammaton.

What an intoxicating contrast! While the Jewish people were marching to their ruin, the reign of the Son of David was beginning among the Gentiles. The chimaera of a triumphant Messiah of the nations was becoming an immediate and sovereign reality. Did Paul dream of this prodigious compensation? The national future of the Israelites seems to have concerned him but little. Being a mystic, he worried solely about their welfare in eternity.

Nevertheless, he by no means neglected the temporal aspect of the Church. A prophet named Agabus who had come down from Jerusalem to Antioch, had predicted "a great famine over all the world." The church of Jerusalem was on the brink of poverty. The larger the congregation became, the greater grew the discrepancy between its resources and its needs. When the scourge arrived—in the year 44—the cost of foodstuffs was so forbidding that it became doubtful whether the church could furnish the believers with their daily requirements of wheat, oil, and figs. The Christians of Antioch, who were less affected by the crisis, thought of raising a collection. Paul and Barnabas were commissioned to carry the money to Jerusalem. It was they, apparently, who had suggested this offering. In fulfilling the law of charity according to Christ, they were also following a Jewish tradition, as the Jews of the Diaspora sent alms to the sacred treasury or *Corban* annually, entrusted to special messengers called *apostles*.

On his first trip to Jerusalem Paul had seen a vision in the Temple. Jesus had distinctly commanded him, "Depart, for I will send thee forth far hence unto the Gentiles." This time he experienced a still more remark-

able exaltation, which he afterwards describes to the Corinthians:

"I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago (whether in the body, I know not, or out of the body, I know not; God knoweth), such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not; God knoweth): That he was caught up into paradise, and heard secret words, which it is not granted to man to utter."

This ecstasy, however mysterious the allusion may be (for every word seems infused with suggestions of divinity) marks an event of vast importance in the personal history of the apostle.

To be caught up to the third heaven was to behold the essence of God, as Moses beheld it when he said to the Lord, "Shew me thy face," and as it is revealed to the archangels and the blessed in the light of glory. This wholly intellectual vision, by enabling Paul to enjoy the human presence of Jesus, added greatly to his previous gifts. When Peter had seen the heavens open and the great sheet descend laden with animals which the Jews believed unclean, this was simply the revelation of a new order on earth. But Paul's ravishment meant that the risen Christ had carried with him the sanctified form of man to occupy the place at the right hand of the Father. The seer could not remember whether his ascent had been effected by a miraculous assumption of all his person or in spirit only. He could not have repeated the words he had heard spoken, or have described the substances he had perceived in the light of the intuition (sight and hearing had been but one).

But he retained a sublime evidence of his ecstasy: the All-Powerful was his guide; an invisible column of fire

preceded him; and in following after it, he could neither go astray nor fail.

About the same time, shortly after Paul's visit, an unmistakable miracle served to encourage the churches. The sharp-eyed Jews were annoyed at the progress of the Christian sect; to satisfy them, Herod Agrippa had ordered the beheading of James, the brother of John. Peter was in prison; due to the Passover, his appearance before the Sanhedrin was being delayed. One night an angel loosened his chains and led him past the sleeping soldiers. He left Jerusalem. And according to the author of the Acts, who is intentionally vague, he "went into another place."

When the angel had left him, Peter found himself alone on a deserted street; and on completely awaking he recognized a few paces distant the house of Mary, who was the aunt of Barnabas and the mother of the future evangelist John Mark. Christians had gathered here to pray for the safety of their leader. His unexpected appearance astounded and transported them. The chosen of Christ had nothing to fear of men, when he protected them in view of his great designs!

At Caesarea, some months later, Herod Agrippa died suddenly of an atrocious malady in the very midst of his idolatrous triumph. The way in which this haughty persecutor met his end served as another *sign* for the saints to take heart.

Paul must have looked upon these events as an assurance of victory for the work that he himself was planning. He was not unaware of all that he would have to suffer; but so much the better! Christ Jesus had come to his glory by the path of agony. Would the disciples be "above the Master"? It was their task to supplement

his sufferings, in so far as they would serve to unite the mystical body of his Church. But Paul did not choose to dwell on these expected tribulations. Intent as he was on thoughts of immediate or subsequent conquest, with such rich rewards in view he could have applied to himself in a spiritual sense the device of his tribal patriarch, "Benjamin a ravenous wolf, in the morning shall eat the prey, and in the evening shall divide the spoil."

He returned from Jerusalem with Barnabas, bringing a companion who was eventually to cause an accidental rupture between them. This was John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas.

Paul was prepared, one suspects, for vast missions, impatient to carry the name of the Lord into regions where it was still unknown. Nevertheless, he would not depart alone, nor until the Church, which recognized the same obedience to the Holy Ghost as he himself, had defined and sanctioned his apostleship. The youthful Church possessed this divine power of unity in love, which it has never lost. Nothing of importance was decided until the elders and the other members of the congregation had prayed, observed the rites, and prudently conferred.

The men who guided the Church were assigned definite tasks by the apostles. These ministrations differed for prophets and doctors. The prophets, who were inspired, sometimes revealed the future, but in particular they interpreted the truths of doctrines and disclosed the ways to follow in the guidance of the soul. The doctors taught without personal inspiration. It is possible that the same men acted as prophets on some occasions and on others taught as simple doctors; the Spirit did not move them uniformly.

Since the persecution had deprived the church at Jerusalem of its leader, the church in Antioch was at the head of the Christian community. With its prophets and its doctors, it was an epitome of the Orient: Cyprus was represented by Barnabas; Cilicia by Saul; Ethiopia by a certain Simeon, called the Black; Numidian Africa by Lucius of Cyrene; and Palestine by Manaen, who was said to be the elder foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch. Except for the last-named, they were all Hellenist Jews. Each had maintained connections with his birthplace that would be useful to the faith. They dreamed of transplanting Christ's teachings to their homeland, and they hailed Saul's projects as an answer to their common hope.

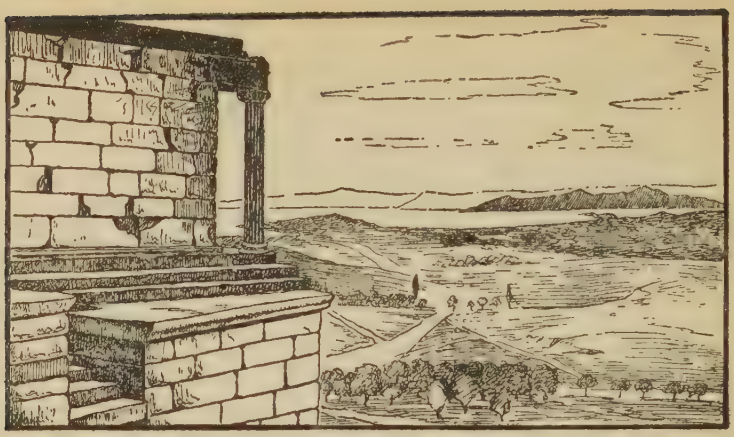
But before setting out, he and Barnabas waited for some sign from the Spirit. The leaders assembled in what would now be called a "retreat." They fasted, called upon the Lord, and broke the sacred bread together. At the close of this liturgy the divine Will manifested itself, causing them to hear these words, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." They had been so separated from the beginning of time, predestined to their work, in which no one else could rival them. But a solemn consecration was required to bestow their apostolic powers upon them. Accordingly their brethren, in the presence of the community, laid their hands on them, as is done by ordained priests in the ordaining of other priests.

In receiving this liturgical delegation of authority, Paul did not feel that he was detracting from his gospel. He knew that there was but "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Since all the brethren were living like him in Christ, the charismata were transmitted through their

hands to him just as they had descended from the direct effusion of the Spirit. In his eagerness he saw one single resplendent fact: the Christ would be proclaimed to peoples far away, in accordance with the will of his Church, which was the will of God.

No explorer on the edge of the uncharted ever experienced the intoxication of Paul as he set out with Barnabas and John Mark along the road leading to the port of Seleucia. The mountains to the right and left spread out in the shape of a fan, allowing the sea beyond to open like a field of Paradise. The sea itself had no attraction for him; there are almost no figurative allusions to it in the writings of this man who sailed so often. Is this explained by the Jews' hereditary aversion to the sea? Or does it result rather from an indifference to the physical world whereby all thought of animals, flowers, water, and the blue of the sky is put aside? Despite all, I would believe that Paul loved the sea as the channel by which the Gospel would be carried to the farthest reaches of the earth.

"The islands wait for me," the prophet had said, addressing Jerusalem the eternal, "that I may bring thy sons from afar." The day when Paul boarded the ship which was to bring him to Cyprus, the *islands* were waiting for him, and all the Gentile peoples trembled to their depths in vague surmise of their redemption. These three humble passengers, at the bow beneath the sails, probably carried neither money in their belts, nor wallets on their backs, nor even staffs in their hands. But on their return they were to have won a whole race of righteous men for their Lord. Surely nothing of greater moment for the future of mankind has yet been beheld.



VII

AT CYPRUS

PAUL AND THE POWER OF ROME

PAUL and Barnabas did not go to Cyprus like adventurers or Gauls or some quixotic Ulysses, but as methodical Jews. They weighed their resources and their chances of success. Good sense and divine inspiration worked together.

Barnabas, being a native of the island, knew where their mission was most likely to receive support. All the cities of the eastern shore had thriving synagogues; the proximity of Egypt, the large copper mines, the beautiful pine forests which supplied the material for shipbuilding, the wheat raised on plains which were watered by the canals of the river Pidias, the vineyards and olive groves on the hills, all served to make the region highly prosperous, and the Jewish merchants reaped big profits. They did not scorn the money of thousands

of pilgrims who were attracted by the temple of Aphrodite at Paphos. The Greeks also made money here, and had especially spread through those sections where the presence of foreigners assured them of customers. Rome imposed her government and military organization upon this horde of Orientals. She built fortresses, aqueducts, and amphitheatres, and in turn drew on the country for raw materials, food products, taxes, and men.

Thus the apostles found here the two forces which they hoped to win over to the Gospel: Israel and the Gentiles. As on other occasions, they first offered salvation to Israel. At Salamis, a vast mercantile port founded by Greek colonists, they disembarked and announced Jesus in the synagogues. They continued preaching, it seems, for some time, and encountered no hostility. They did not establish a church, however, but merely prepared the way for one; they obtained no group conversions.

They went from city to city along this coast with the enchanted name. Citium, Amathus, Paphos. The shore of Paphos still recalls past delights. The roses of the goddess have not ceased to flower. The white houses seem like her doves slumbering beside the waters from which she emerged. The remains of the temple are still to be seen on a hill half a league from the sea. Here the great throngs could worship an Aphrodite devoid of human form, a truncated cone made of stone and veiled by a purple drapery, an elementary image of all-fecund nature. In the woods of Idalion the amorous Aphrodite was honoured by ritual excesses.

Paul constantly associated the idolatrous cults with the idea of degradation. Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, and the usual customs of the pagans in their

decline served only two well to justify this essentially Jewish attitude. Perhaps he never saw more clearly than at Paphos the superhuman difficulty of combating incontinence among the pagans, who believed that they were giving thanks to the gods in abandoning themselves to their appetites.

Paul, who was chaste and who (despite the assertion of Eusebius) had never married, none the less felt "another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind, and captivating me in the law of sin, that is in my members." For this reason he would avoid the absurd rigours in which so many of the sectarians of the Orient were immersed. He vehemently condemned certain vices which had become fashionable among the Romans under the schooling of Asia. The Jews punished sodomy with death; the penalty for the cohabitation of son-in-law and mother-in-law was death by stoning. Paul showed these same aversions.

Nevertheless, he was content to explain with admirable logic how a man who glorifies the freedom of his flesh defiles it, degrades the body which the Holy Ghost had chosen as its temple. He proclaimed virginity superior to marriage. But no one, after Jesus, more solemnly attested the holy grandeur of the conjugal union; and he advised even the young Corinthian widows that it was "better to marry than to burn."

The evidence of wisdom in his doctrine is the fact that, whenever he is on the verge of an overzealous decision, he rectifies his position by some evangelical principle or empirical fact. He concedes as much to human frailty as the divine law permits. But he never compromises with the spirit of evil. An incident at Paphos shows how strongly he felt about the false prophets.

There was a Jewish charlatan here named Barjesus, and known under the surname of Elymas the Sorcerer. Through his familiarity with the occult sciences this man had gained favour with the proconsul Sergius Paulus, a well-read dignitary who took an interest in theosophy. Despite the admonitions of the Law, the Jews were greatly addicted to astrology, sorcery, and necromancy, and had faith in such pursuits. We read in the Talmud:

"R. Josua ben Hanania said: 'I can take gourds and melons, and make of them goats and deer which will reproduce after their kind.'

"R. Hania said: 'I was walking in a street of Sephoris. I saw a man take a stone and toss it into the air. When this object fell to earth again, it had become a calf.' "

Their national genius especially fitted them to play the rôle of prophet, which they found both agreeable and lucrative. It was a fashion of the day for princes to retain one or more of these seers, who were called Chaldeans or mathematicians. Tiberius, during the exile at Rhodes, was initiated into the secrets of astrology. Cyprus was also a nest of sorcerers. Simon Magus, who was said to be a Cyprian, had acquired his vain prowess at a good school.

The *Golden Ass* of Apuleius gives us some insight into the mad and sinister position which sorcery held during the closing centuries of the empire. The sorcerers claimed that by means of certain words or ointments they could transform men into beasts and restore them to their former state at will. They compounded love-philters, cast spells, and, to make their work more effective, sold poisons. They placed their alluring knowledge

at the service of ignoble passion and vengeance. This Asiatic plague infested Rome to such an extent that the emperors made it a capital offence to be connected with such consultations either as adviser or client. But they themselves did not hesitate to turn to this questionable profession for assistance.

Elymas knew of the miracles to which Paul and Barnabas bore witness, and he was undoubtedly curious to hear the two men speak. He hoped to outwit them, to appropriate their secrets, and to work wonders that would far surpass his previous art. At the same time he wanted to inquire into their doctrine. Perhaps, like Simon Magus, he had vague Gnostic ideas concerning the relationship between God and the universe, a system compounded of Pythagoras and Plato and culminating in the errors of sensualism. Paul and Barnabas immediately unmasked this schemer, who was more dangerous than an idolater, since he tricked the mind by an alluring mixture of transcendental knowledge and false spiritual ardour.

In the meanwhile, the proconsul had been warned that two missionaries were spreading a new doctrine in the province. He desired to hear them, and the simple energy of their faith astonished him. But Elymas, feeling that his reputation with Sergius Paulus was endangered, did his best to counteract their influence; he slandered them with a bungling persistency. The apostles learned of this, and Paul resolved to crush their adversary. On meeting him, he fixed him with his eyes of flame. And then, in an inspired transport, he addressed the sorcerer in terrifying terms:

"O full of all guile and all villainy, thou son of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not

cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season."

At that moment darkness fell upon the eyes of Elymas; and in order that he might walk, he held forth his hands, seeking some one who would lead him. This startling scene is described by the narrator of the Acts with primitive conciseness and without commentary or judgment. But in scope it is enormous; it is in fact unparalleled.

This is the one time in the known history of Paul when he manifests the miraculous power of chastising the ungodly—and he uses this power for the salvation of men. Being one with the master of the living and the dead, he borrows his omnipotence. He does not hesitate an instant; he knows that the thing will be done, because he desires it for Christ and for Christ's glory. He warns Elymas that he is about to be struck blind and Elymas suddenly loses his sight. Paul's act has proved the absoluteness of his faith, the divine power at his disposal. But the strange thing is that he inflicts the same punishment upon Elymas as the Lord had inflicted upon him. Elymas is a Jew: Paul causes the wretch to feel the heaviness of the veil which had been lifted from the eyes of Saul; he hopes that Israel will understand, and humble itself. Elymas' blindness is to continue but *for a season;* it ceases, unquestionably, when he renounces sorcery and covetous desires. The possibility of his conversion presages the conversion of the Jewish people at the end of time. Meanwhile, Paul's victory converts the Roman proconsul. Sergius Paulus, "when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the teaching of the Lord."

It has been denied that a government official, who was obliged to participate publicly in the cult of the gods and of Caesar, would be likely to change his religion. But the text simply states that Sergius "believed." Did he declare himself a Christian? Did he immediately receive the waters of baptism? We do not know.

His conversion is no less possible. We may consider it as certain as his presence at Cyprus, which is attested by an inscription. To a man who had possessed vague premonitions of the truth, this miracle which Paul permitted him to witness would serve as the first clear impulse. He recognized the superiority of the Christian magician over the Jew. A Roman was bound to be influenced by the evidences of power. Finally, he wanted to receive instruction in the mysteries which the apostles were teaching; he was awed by them—and the Holy Ghost granted him the ability to believe in them.

The first pagan of distinction to become a *disciple* was a representative of the Roman authority in a senatorial province, a man who walked behind the blade and rods of the fasces. This event prefigured the magnificence of the future! Even before Paul, the apostles must have dreamed of subjugating the leading city of the world to Christ. At a later date, which cannot be accurately determined, Peter established the seat of his apostleship in this capital. Nevertheless, when he ordered the centurion Cornelius and the people of his household to be baptized, he had above all looked upon this solemn act as a concession desired by God, who is no respecter of persons, "but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is acceptable to him."

Paul, a Roman citizen, was soon to understand that Rome was the hub of an immense wheel, and that the

Gospel would reach the farthest habitable regions of the earth most quickly by starting from the Milliarium Aurium, the beginning and end of all roads. His Epistle to the Romans surpasses his other messages in bulk; and while a prisoner in Rome, he announced to the Philippians, "My bonds are made manifest in Christ, in all the court, and in all other places." And he concluded this epistle, visibly happy, "All the saints salute you; especially they that are of Caesar's household."

If the correspondence between Paul and Seneca is anything more than a gross fiction, it possibly represents the efforts of the Christians to proselytize among men whose power or intellectual brilliance had brought them renown. Not only the humble, but also people of influence were to be won over. In this matter the Christians were following the example of the Jews, though with other methods.

The Jews at Rome were devoted to the emperor. Thanks to their large numbers and their many intrigues, they had gained favour with the Palatine, were on good terms with the Caesars. At one time Claudius had proscribed them. Nevertheless, a papyrus pictures him in the gardens of Lucullus, where, in the presence of twenty-five senators, sixteen consulars, Agrippina and her ladies of honour, he is pronouncing the sentence of death upon the two Greeks, Isidore and Lampo, who had been the chief instigators of the pogroms of Alexandria. What manoeuverings in the imperial household must have been required to bring about such a sudden change!

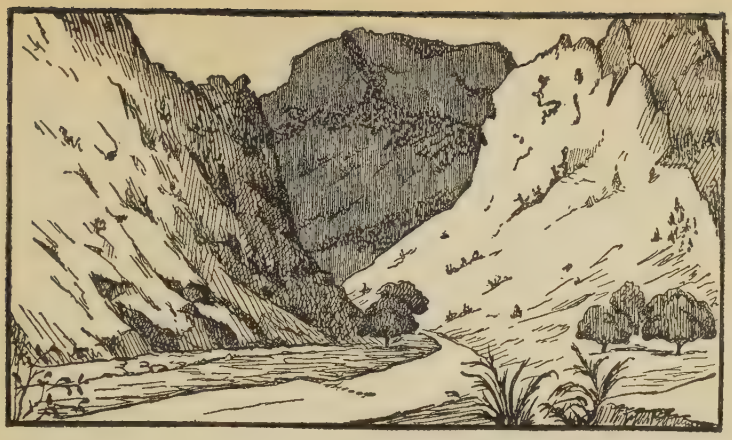
Many Jews were physicians, and in this way were admitted to the intimacy of the great families. The Jewesses utilized their beauty and their artifices. Pop-

paea, who was born a Roman but was a proselyte of the Port, managed to please the amorous fancy of Nero for some time.

The Christians would have their fidelity, gentleness, and discretion to recommend them for positions in the ruler's retinue. The apocryphal Acts of Paul recount that Nero's most intimate servants, Barsabbas Justus of the large feet, Urion the Cappadocian, and Festus the Galatian, were Christians. In the same narrative Paul is represented as proclaiming before Caesar the Kingdom of Christ. This episode may have as its basis some authentic tradition which had become corrupted.

Did Paul hope to change the heart of Nero? Many generations of martyrs, apologists, and saintly women would be needed for the Christian faith to conquer the old idolatry and its priests, the pride and ferocity of the Caesars, the philosophers, sorcerers, and courtesans. For three centuries a slow process of infiltration would continue, until all quarters of the state were invaded. But from the day when the apostle had encountered the good Sergius Paulus, he could think prophetically that Rome was his, which is to say, was Christ's; that the entire world was won.

The fig tree Ruminalis, which was thought to have sheltered Romulus and Remus in their infancy, stood in the Comitium at the foot of the Capitol. It was eight hundred and thirty years old when, in the year 58, the very year in which Paul set out as a prisoner for Rome, it withered. Then new leaves sprouted from its dead branches. The Romans looked upon this as a prodigy, without understanding that Rome would have to die and be born again in the eternity of the Christian miracle.



VIII

THE GATEWAY OF THE FAITH

ADALIA—formerly Attalia—is a little port on the coast of Asia Minor, in a region which was called Pamphylia at the time of Saint Paul. On a mild September morning our boat put in at this enchanting spot. As it lay in the hollow of the bay, the houses suspended in a circle, their greyish rocks melting into an azure gold, I felt as though I had seen it already in a dream —the old tower on the hill, the walls notched at intervals by battlements, a pointed minaret not far from a poplar, the ochre or blood-coloured earth alternating with the bright yellow of a field of rape. This oasis of freshness overhung arid banks which the sun made filmy with moisture; and higher still ran the silver frieze of the abrupt mountains.

On leaving Cyprus, Paul, Barnabas, and John Mark disembarked here, near the mouth of the Cestrus. They then travelled into the interior, to Perga, and

thence beyond the mountains to Antioch of Pisidia.

It may seem strange that they did not sail from Paphos to Egypt. Alexandria, a prodigious field for conquest, beckoned to them, but other missionaries had preceded them. When Apollo, an Alexandrian Jew, was catechised at Ephesus by Aquila and Priscilla, he was already familiar with the rudiments of the faith. Where had he got this knowledge? Apparently in a Christian community that had sprung up among the synagogues of Alexandria. Now Paul had made a rule which he observed whenever possible; he would avoid building on a soil that had been worked by others. He reserved for himself the ignorant Gentiles. His task would be the most thankless of all, but the most fruitful if he succeeded. It is for this reason, we may suppose, that he neglected Egypt. The Spirit undoubtedly directed him elsewhere.

He set out for regions where, he knew, the inhabitants were devoted to the cult of the god Men (Lunus). He had seen these mountaineers at Tarsus, as they came down through the pass of the Taurus.

In his little company, which had grown on the way, the trip to Cyprus had made clear one very important matter. Paul's pre-eminent gifts, his resolute attitude, and the miracle which converted Sergius Paulus had revealed him as a leader. Henceforth the companions of Paul and Barnabas considered themselves as grouped about Paul. Barnabas no longer led, but followed; and on their departure from Pamphylia John Mark left them, for reasons which have been inadequately explained. Paul was deeply wounded by this desertion. And later, at the time of his second mission, he refused to take John Mark with him—and Barnabas was angered.

It has been suggested that the young man was afraid to risk himself in the wild passes of an idolatrous country where the travellers might expect to come upon a company of bandits at the turn of every gorge. A more likely explanation seems to be that John Mark adhered to the Judaic traditions and that he advocated doctrines which Paul could not admit. He became irritated at Paul's rebukes, and went back to Jerusalem. But he must have regretted that he had been so headstrong. When another campaign was being organized, he again wanted to join Paul. The latter was severe; in his eyes, John Mark was an unruly workman who had "not gone with them to the work." It seemed impossible to let him again become a member of Paul's party.

More than one historian blames the apostle for his inflexible attitude. As though we were able to weigh its motives! Obviously his sternness was not dictated by tyrannical self-love. There were principles at stake in this conflict; otherwise Mark would have been forgiven. Paul was later reconciled with him, and when pressing Timothy to join him at Rome, he recommended, "Take Mark, and bring him with thee."

Mark, in the language of Paul, long remained a subordinate, "their attendant." He was the secretary of the bishop, whom he accompanied on his travels, but he was an humble, intelligent, and pious secretary, thoroughly worthy of his task of faithfully recording the gospel that Peter entrusted to him.

What is to be gained by lingering over this incident, or by inquiring why Paul and Barnabas did not stop in Pamphylia? They could have gained disciples there. Christ was not unknown in that region. The day on which the tongues of fire had descended, following the

first homily of the Twelve, there were not only Egyptians among the believers, but *Pamphylians,* or at least Jews living in Pamphylia. The country harboured a variety of races and religions. The Cilicians, the descendants or successors of pirates, were the neighbours of the mountaineers of the Taurus, who were more or less the sons of brigands. Traders of all nations gathered here. Such confusion afforded the apostles a good opportunity for building up the rudiments of a church. But it is probable that others had done this work before them—and Paul especially was impatient to carry the faith to those who seemed the farthest from it.

He and his companions, probably as members of a caravan, now entered the mountains. The region abounded in torrents, treacherous rock-formations, and possibilities of ambush. Today the roads of the Taurus still retain their wild disturbing aspect as they turn off at abrupt angles, run along the edges of abysses, or drop between perpendicular walls that almost touch in places. Sharp, cone-shaped peaks permit the view of countless others beyond them. It is easy to imagine how, even after the Roman conquest, bands of marauders could have remained here unmolested.

Paul and Barnabas made the trip without mishap. North of two blue lakes, they reached Antioch of Pisidia, a Greek city which had become a colony of the empire and was the centre of a powerful Jewry. The apostles entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, while the service was in progress. They sat down like two discreet strangers on one of the benches against the rear wall.

The head of the synagogue, the archisynagogos, recited the prayers; then the *hazzan* handed the reader

the scrolls of the Law and of the prophets. When the reader had chanted a Hebrew verse in his monotonous nasal voice, the translator in the same tone interpreted it for the congregation in the vulgar tongue. Then the archisynagogos turned towards the two visitors. One of them, he knew, was a Levite, and the other a disciple of Gamaliel. In accordance with the formula, he invited them to comment upon the texts which had just been read. "Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on."

Paul arose; his right hand was lowered solemnly to command attention. This gesture was traditional among the Jews. There are orators who make an impression before opening their lips; and men of small stature often have more imperious gestures than taller ones.

Paul's address, such as it has been transmitted to us, is more than an imaginary piece of eloquence; it gives in miniature the type of homily that he employed with Jewish audiences. It is grave, and even formal, in tone; one might say that the vaults of the synagogue constrain the vivacity of his dialectic, and that he forces himself to speak impersonally.

At the beginning, the apostle recalls the vocation of the holy people, the miracles by which God attested that he led them, reserving for them a promised land and leaders "made of the seed of David according to the flesh." He had caused the line of King David to have as issue the Saviour Jesus, "the latchet of whose shoe," John said, "I am not worthy to unloose."

"Brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and those among you that fear God, to us is the word of this salvation gone forth. For they that dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor

the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath, fulfilled them by condemning him. . . . But God raised him from the dead."

And Paul recalls the text of the much quoted Psalm, "Nor wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption."

His only arguments are drawn from the prophets and from the evidence of those who have seen Christ risen. Paul seems to forget that he himself had a vision of the Lord. He makes no mention of Damascus or of his conversion. He presents himself as the messenger of a doctrine that he had received from others.

"Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you remission of sins; and by him every one that believeth is justified from all things, from which he could not be justified by the law of Moses."

This heretical statement must have caused a dull murmur of dissent. Paul, sensing the stirrings of hostility, holds a veiled threat over his audience. He recalls three verses of a prophet picturing the Day of Judgment when God will "work a wonder in your days, which ye will not believe though it be told you." Nevertheless, when the archisynagogos had pronounced the customary benedictions at the close of the meeting, out of politeness he invited the two missionaries to come the following Sabbath. It is quite probable that their doctrines had disturbed him.

On the street and in the house of an Israelite host or of one "fearing God," Paul and Barnabas continued preaching. Many Jews and even more pagans gathered around them. They spoke with such power of persuasion that a certain number were convinced and prepared for baptism.

Accordingly, on the following Sabbath nearly every one who was entitled to enter the synagogue crowded in to hear the apostles. The Jews were greatly annoyed by the profusion and zeal of the pagans. Always this jealous unbending pride—and the love of Christ must have been prodigious among the members of the primitive Church to make them welcome a brotherhood which placed Greeks, barbarians, on the same footing with Hebrews.

Paul and Barnabas explained the nature of the divine mystery, how grace is given by the love of Christ to any one who has faith, be he Jew or Gentile. Hoarse cries interrupted his homily. The Jews insulted the name of Christ. Then, rising against the blasphemers, Paul and Barnabas uttered this audacious sentence:

"It was necessary that the word of God should first be spoken to you. Seeing ye thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying,

"I have set thee for a light of the Gentiles,
That thou shouldst be for salvation unto the uttermost
part of the earth."

Those of the pagans who were alert to the message of life were transported to hear that it was now meant for them, since Israel would have none of it. A great stir arose throughout the whole region. Even in the cabins of the woodsmen and among the brigands on the high plateaux it was known that the God-man had saved the world.

But the Jews were outraged, and they contrived to extend the resentment against the apostles to all per-

sons of influence in the city—the devout women of wealth who attended the synagogue,[1] the Greek merchants, the magistrates, even the Roman military authorities. As a result the intruders were expelled from the precincts of Antioch.

Paul and Barnabas remembered the counsel, "And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words: going forth out of that house or city shake off the dust from your feet." Thus they shook the dust of their sandals on the Jews of Antioch, as a sign that they no longer had anything in common with them. They travelled southeast across the steppes of Lycaonia, a country which raised "wild asses and coarse-wooled sheep," and which was swept by bitter winds.

As they approached Iconium, Paul must have thought of Damascus. Like Damascus, this city (now called Konieh) rests its ramparts, towers and heavy gates against burning hills. As at Damascus, the trees of its orchards are irrigated with small canals fed by the waters of a torrent. Iconium, like Damascus, is at the intersection of vast trade routes. It connects Galatia and Phrygia with Cappadocia, Armenia, the Pontus, Cilicia, and Syria.

But all the past of Iconium is concentrated in one single resplendent episode: Paul's meeting with Thecla, that strange young girl who was carried away with divine love, and whose intensely animated features are in strong contrast to the highly simple traits of the other women converted by the apostle. Thecla, in Asia at the dawn of the faith, reveals a soul like that of Angela of

[1] The pagan women were more easily converted to Judaism than men, as women did not have to undergo circumcision.

Foligno, or Catherine of Siena, or Saint Theresa. Unfortunately the version of her story that has come down to us is garbled in too many details. The author of the apocryphal Acts, who according to Tertullian was a priest of Asia, fabricates for our edification, and piles up extravagant miracles. He verges on the heresy of the encratites, who consider absolute chastity to be the foundation of the faith.

Nevertheless, Saint Thecla is not his own invention. Origen, Saint John Chrysostom, and Saint Augustine all speak of her as an authentic martyr. In the fourth century, Silvia Aquitana visited her tomb not far from Tarsus, at Seleucia of Isauria, and read her official Acts.

In her legend we can discern the vestiges of facts that are real or symbolically true. When Paul entered the house of Onesiphorus, he smiled, and Onesiphorus welcomed him as a servant of the Lord. Paul answered, "May the grace of God be with thee and with thy household." Then they knelt, broke bread (the eucharist) and repeated the words of God concerning continence and the Resurrection. Is this the Onesiphorus to whom Paul asked Timothy to convey his greetings? We should have to suppose that he was already a Christian at the time when Paul came to Iconium; and this is not very likely. But what insight this entrance of the apostle gives us into the simple goodness and tenderness of Christianity's golden age!

While Paul was preaching, with open doors, in the home of Onesiphorus, Theoclia's daughter Thecla, who was betrothed to Thamyris, sat in the nearest window of her mother's house, listening to the stranger day and night. She never moved; she was "fixed in the faith."

And seeing many women and virgins brought before Paul, she desired to be judged worthy of facing him, for she had not yet seen his features.

But as she would not leave the window, her mother sent for Thamyris. The young man arrived in high spirits, thinking that he was to receive her this very day in marriage. He said to Theoclia, "Where is Thecla, that I may see her?" Then Theoclia answered: "I have tidings for thee. For three days and three nights Thecla hath not risen from the window, neither to eat nor to drink; but spellbound with delight, she doth listen to the crafty teachings of a stranger." This man, she explained, was causing ruin to the city of the Iconians, as also to Thecla herself, for all the women and young people were coming to him and learning that they should fear the one and only God and should live in chastity. Her daughter also had been affected. His words kept her clinging to the window "like a spider's web." And she told Thamyris to approach Thecla.

Thamyris went to her, filled with love for her and shy with enchantment. He asked her why she remained there, and what passion had laid hold of her to make her so unlike herself. "Turn towards thy Thamyris," he said, "and be thou ashamed." The mother also came to plead with her, asking why she remained sitting there absent-mindedly, with lowered eyes, refusing to answer them.

And they wept bitterly—"Thamyris for the loss of a wife, and Theoclia of a child, and the maidservants of a mistress." Meanwhile, Thecla never turned; she remained in a state of ecstasy, seeing and hearing no one but Paul.

Thamyris, "being filled with anger and rage," de-

nounced the magician to the governor of the city. Paul, when dragged by the crowd before the proconsul, preached to him of Jesus crucified. He was cast into a dungeon. But during the night, Thecla took her bracelets from her wrists and gave them to the gatekeeper of the house; and when the door was opened for her, she set out for the prison. To bribe the gaoler, she gave him a silver mirror. She went in with Paul; and seating herself at his feet, "she heard great things of God." And Paul feared nothing; and as she kissed his chains, the faith was strengthened in her.

Theoclia and Thamyris began a search for Thecla; they surprised her with the prisoner and separated her from him. But she wept and "wallowed on the ground in the place where he sat and taught her in the prison." The two were brought before a magistrate. The multitude shouted, "He is a magician! Away with him!" Thecla, in a state of ravishment, contemplated her master. Her mother cried out to the governor in exasperation:

"Burn the wicked wretch; burn in the midst of the theatre her that will not marry, in order that all the women that have been taught by this man may be frightened."

The governor, to curry favour, ordered Paul to be beaten and driven out of Iconium, condemning Thecla to the stake. The fire would not touch her; lifted up by a miracle, she rejoined Paul, who had taken refuge in a tomb with Onesiphorus and the members of his household. The sequel is a maze of fable from which a few scraps of historic tradition emerge.

However poor it may seem, the story of Thecla is inestimable. One senses some of that early fervour which,

because of Saint Paul, was later to be called the madness of the Cross. The girl's ecstasy bore no relation to Paul as a person; she took no interest in his eloquence for its own sake. But she drank from his lips a truth for which she had unconsciously been thirsting. Of a sudden she received the promise of the beatitudes; she discovered "the Way." The heavens had opened; the Being was known, possessed.

It would be a gross mistake to look upon this intense enthusiasm as an Asiatic frenzy akin to the fury with which the priests of Cybele celebrate their orgies of blood. It was the intoxicating properties of the doctrine alone that made Thecla cling to the words of the annunciator. He had revealed two things to her: sublime purity and the Resurrection.

In order to influence the pagans in heart as well as in mind, something beyond rational certitudes would be necessary. They required the exaltation of charity, the deliciousness of renunciation, and the hope of unending happiness. Few legends surpass the story of Thecla in their ability to make us feel the incredible enthusiasm of this first initiation.

The authentic records give us few clear facts concerning the sojourn of Paul and Barnabas at Iconium. They remained here for some time. Their testimony was confirmed by miracles and "signs." They converted numerous Jews and Greeks. But the Jews who had remained unbelievers incited the mass of the pagans against the "brethren." The people were divided into two factions, the one siding with the Jews, the other supporting the new church. A tumult broke out; armed with clubs and stones, the crowd marched to the house where the apostles were teaching. They were in danger

of being flogged and stoned to death, but were able to escape. They took refuge five leagues to the southeast, in the little town of Lystra in Lycaonia. Here they were sure of finding few Jews and a semi-barbarous country, which they would open to the Gospel.

As a matter of fact, it seems that at first the apostles met with no opposition. They were even able to do something that they had never done before—to carry the word to the outlying towns and to baptize the country folk.

In the city they were accorded an embarrassing deification as the result of a miracle, one of the few miracles of Paul that the Acts mentions with precision. Near the place where he was speaking, in a suburb apparently, Paul had noticed a beggar sitting on the ground. The infirm man, who was crippled and lame from birth, listened with his whole soul to the doctrines which promised him blessedness. Perhaps Paul had quoted the saying of the Lord, "The blind see, the lame walk." The prophet rested his eyes upon him, and in a powerful voice cried out to him, "Stand upright on thy feet."

Peter had similarly called to the cripple in the Temple, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, arise and walk." And he had taken him by the hand to bring him to his feet. Paul refrained from naming Jesus; he did not touch the cripple. But the man was cured instantly. He leapt up, and began moving about and walking. And when the astonished crowd saw that the stranger had done this unheard-of thing, they shouted deliriously, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men."

These cries were uttered in the language of Lycaonia, so that Paul and Barnabas did not grasp their meaning.

The people of the country understood Greek; but in their daily dealings with one another, and especially at times of excitement, they spoke a foreign dialect which is thought to have been related to Syriac or Cappadocian. They knew the legend of Philemon and Baucis—how Zeus while travelling with Hermes was given shelter by the pious couple, to whom the gods assured a long and peaceful life. In their enthusiasm they thought that Barnabas was Zeus and Paul, Hermes. The imposing appearance of Barnabas doubtlessly contributed to this illusion; and Paul, being small, alert, the healer of an incurable invalid and a master in the art of persuasion, suggested the agile Hermes, the god of health and patron of eloquence.

Near the gates, not far from the place where they received their thunderous ovation, there was a temple dedicated to Zeus as guardian of the city. The people ran to tell the priest of the unexpected visit of the gods, and of the prodigy that confirmed it. He readily believed in this stroke of good fortune, and made all arrangements for a sacrifice. The ceremony proceeded according to formula: there were white bulls laden with garlands, *victimarii*, flute players, an acolyte bearing the wheat and salt—nothing was lacking to the festivity except the august personages in whose honour it was planned.

The apostles had slipped away after the first outburst of enthusiasm. People came to notify them of the homage that was being prepared for them. They were overcome with righteous indignation. To symbolize their distress they rent their garments, as was the Jewish custom. Then they rushed among the multitude, crying out:

"Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and bring you good tidings, that ye should turn from these vain things unto the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea, and all that in them is: who in the generations gone by suffered all the nations to walk in their own ways. And yet he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness."

In improvising this address, the apostles did not forget that they were dealing with pagans. They used the simplest terms to convey the idea of the Deity, speaking of the one God but not mentioning Jesus Christ. The people, who were finally disillusioned by the words, dispersed. Enormous deception! They felt the need of good and powerful gods whom they could touch; the God announced by the new prophets had never shown himself. How believe in him? As to the priest, he could not forgive them for the miscarriage of the ceremony, the insult to the great Zeus, and his failure to realize the substantial revenues that he had probably counted upon.

Meanwhile, some Jews who were rabidly opposed to the Gospel arrived from Antioch of Pisidia, having come to these out-of-the-way regions on business. They slandered Paul and Barnabas, especially Paul, since he was the more active of the two. They were indignant with his overly lenient views on circumcision and other practices of the Law. They explained that the inhabitants of Antioch had been obliged to expel these jugglers, these nobodies, who proclaimed as the true God a lawfully punished criminal. The crowd, which was changeable and unfriendly, became angry. Once when Paul was separated from his companions, a group sur-

rounded him and hit him on the head with stones. He fell in a swoon; the assassins, thinking him dead, dragged his body outside the city and abandoned it to the dogs and crows. His disciples heard of this, but they found him miraculously restored. He arose and returned to Lystra, escorted by his defenders.

The *next day,* still severely bruised, he set out with Barnabas. They reached a large fortified town, the farthest outpost of the frontier, in the Roman province of Galatia. The place was called Derbe, and according to Strabo it was situated at the foot of the mountains of Isauria, in a wild country which the brigands of the Taurus devastated by raids. It seems that the Jews never ventured this far—and the apostles instructed these simple-hearted mountaineers unmolested. Later, a Christian of Derbe, Gaius, accompanied Paul on a perilous voyage through Macedonia.

By a five or six days' march from Derbe over the Taurus they could have reached Tarsus. But instead—and we should like to know whether the honour of this decision belongs to Paul or to Barnabas, or whether they had agreed upon this course before leaving Syria—they retraced their steps, again visiting Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia. The procedure was singularly bold and fruitful; this time they seem to have met with no violence.

In every city through which the missionaries had passed, the Christians had maintained a fervent brotherhood, which was covertly increasing. They assembled in the evening in the upper room of a private house. Their propaganda did little to disturb the established cults. Every revolutionary innovation at the outset develops with the aid of official indifference. Who in the pagan

world at that time could have suspected the future of these little intimate groups which worshipped a God devoid of glory?

When Paul and Barnabas again passed through Lystra, Iconium, and elsewhere, the popular uprisings caused by their presence had been forgotten during the intervening months. They no longer preached at the synagogue, nor in the agora. They set about to uplift the neophytes by homilies, the communion, and the love-feasts. In this intimate manner they would forge good Christian armour for them, giving them what Paul has called the "helmet and the shield of faith." They showed by their own example that one must suffer to merit the Kingdom of God. This mystery must have astonished the pagan converts despite the myth of the hero Hercules, who had risen to Olympus after his twelve labours. For Hercules had merely fulfilled the law of his destiny; his trials were not motivated by love. He had subdued monsters, but he had not subdued the flesh. He had sought his own triumph, never the salvation of the world. Paul's body already bore "the marks of the Lord Jesus." He offered it as "a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God."

Thus the apostles returned to each community with the prestige of work accomplished and of sufferings overcome. They devoted themselves to the task of building up a stable organization.

These congregations had not been unguided during their absence. Some one had presided over the meetings, had read the Psalms and the prophets, and at the breaking of the bread and the partaking of the wine had pronounced the benediction that was to become known as the "eucharist." Certain believers were commissioned

to distribute the bread to the congregation, to baptize the catechumens, to bury the dead. Some of them, by the grace of the Spirit, qualified as prophets and doctors; others had administrative ability. Some were glossolalists, and when the inspiration was on them, they would utter disconnected effusions, flights of tenderness and mystic joy, which were often unintelligible to the congregation as a whole.

These churches still lacked a regular line of leaders to hand down from one to another the powers received from on high. Each of them was like a vine sending out shoots profusely and somewhat at random.

Paul and Barnabas organized a council of elders, such as they had seen at Jerusalem and Antioch, and doubtless similar to the Jewish presbytery. In the synagogue the council of elders supervised the religious welfare of the community, administered the common goods (it was a "juristic person"), protected their interests before the non-Jewish authorities, and possessed the power of excommunicating the unworthy. But the Christian bishops were invested with a power which was predominantly spiritual. As Paul wrote to Timothy, it devolved upon them to "keep that which is committed to thy trust," to assure the integrity of the rites and mysteries. After fasting and praying, the apostles chose the fittest members of the Church—and we know the qualifications which they demanded. "A bishop must be without crime, as the steward of God: not proud, not subject to anger, not given to wine, no striker, not guilty of filthy lucre: but given to hospitality, gentle, sober, just, holy, continent: embracing that faithful word which is according to doctrine, that he may be able to

exhort in sound doctrine, and to convince the gainsayers."

The apostles laid their hands upon them as a way of transmitting their powers. Paul later recommended to Timothy, "Impose not hands lightly upon any man." The ordination resembled that of the seven deacons; it was like the ordination that he and Barnabas had received of the elders of Antioch.

Following the election of the elders, they departed, after they had "commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed." On approaching Perga, they sowed the word through all Pamphylia, and this time they stopped at Perga long enough to establish a church there. They re-embarked at the port of Attalia, reached the mouth of the Orontes, and went up the river as far as Antioch, where they announced "the things which God hath prepared for them."

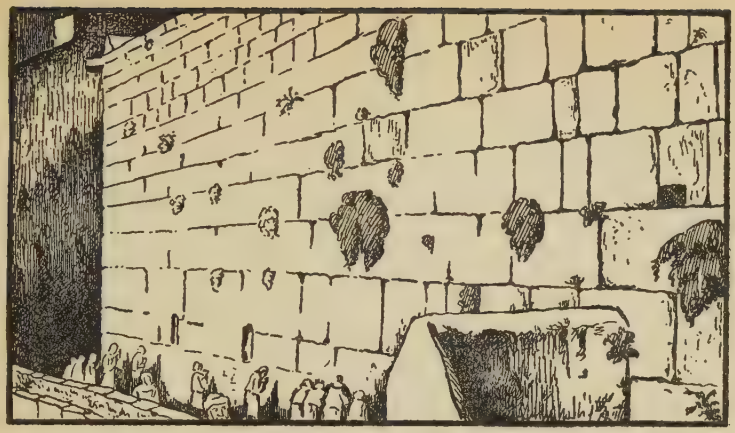
Their journey had lasted four or five years—from 44 or 45 to 49. The area covered had not been very extensive, but it prefigured the plan of the future. They knew, with their sublime confidence, that not one of the seven churches which they had founded would perish. And above all the test had been made: God "had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles."

Let us pause before so significant a metaphor. Since the original revelation was lost, the generations had sat "in the shadow of death." Israel kept the stone tables of the Decalogue pressed to its jealous heart. The eternal light had not ceased to shine for other peoples, but the darkness in which they were plunged admitted only hesitant or fragmentary rays.

Those who desired to know were crushed against the

gate of bronze. The enigma of death repelled them. Concerning this mystery of fate, Socrates, the least vague of the philosophers, had not been able to go beyond the hypothesis that death is either a dreamless sleep or an entrance into the light among the gods and the immortal sages.

At present, Christ had descended among the dead; in rising again in triumph, he had shattered the gate for ever, and all men could enter. Paradise regained for mankind—celestial happiness—the possession of God—such was the gladdening message borne by the apostles to places where it had never been heard before. And it resounds in our ears as though it had been proclaimed but yesterday—for until the end of time the centuries will live by it alone.



IX

THE CONFLICT OVER THE OBSERVANCES

EVERY growing power must pass through a critical period that will affect its entire destiny, just as a battle is won at that particular moment wherein a certain move is decided upon. In his human dealings Jesus had not escaped the workings of this law. Previous to his public life, he had met temptation in the desert; and to confound the powers of evil he had discovered three words, three sword-strokes, which signified: I have conquered the world.

Before surmounting the heresies, the Church had to disengage itself from a peril that was implicit in its Jewish origins. Would it break completely clear of the synagogue, or would it insist that the pagan converts accept the Pharisaic observances—circumcision, the Sabbath, the festival of the new moon, the Law's endless definitions of the unclean?

Although other peoples, such as the Egyptians, had practised circumcision, it made the Jews a race apart in the eyes of the pagans, and marked them out for public ridicule. In a passage of Petronius we see how they were looked upon by a cultivated Roman at the time of Saint Paul:

"Even though he does worship the deity in the form of a pig and prays to the animal with the long ears, if a Jew is not circumcised he will find himself cut off from the Hebrew people and forced to emigrate to some Greek city where he will be exempted from the feast of the Sabbath. Thus with this people, the one way of proving oneself a person of quality and a freeman is by having the courage to be circumcised."

No proselyte was admitted to a Jewish congregation without having consented to this painful rite. Few men submitted to it; if the Christian Church had required it, the Greeks and Occidentals would have been won over but slowly and in small numbers. The Church would have remained little more than a side-branch engrafted upon the trunk of Judaism. Furthermore, circumcision was but a symbol and seal of expectation. It commemorated Abraham's faith in the promise, in the Messiah who would come bringing freedom. It marked the curtailment of sensual appetite, represented the healing of sin by grace. But now that the water of the baptism gave the sanctifying fulness, this was the end of signs and transitory remedies.

Nevertheless, the Christians who had been born Jews found it hard to conceive of a perfect Christian without circumcision. In Palestine, especially, there was a rigourist clan which insisted that no man can be saved

unless he is circumcised in accordance with the custom of Moses.

Some members of this faction came down from Judea to Antioch, the centre of the uncircumcised. They publicly anathematized the teachings of Paul and Barnabas. These men, they said, would sacrifice the true doctrine to win over the masses and convert the heathen more easily. The apostles realized the gravity of such propaganda. To insist that the Gentiles should be circumcised meant to require their observance of the Law in its totality. If the Law remained necessary or sufficient for salvation, of what value was the faith in Christ Jesus? They might as well remain Jews; and make Jewish proselytes! Christ would have suffered in vain and have justified mankind by his blood in vain. The Law was a curse; would they really fasten this yoke about the necks of those who had never known its burden?

Paul and Barnabas combated such retrogression with the full force of their inspiration and experience. But the Jews of Antioch agreed with the fanatics of the Jewish orthodoxy. The synagogue tried to take back the Church into its bosom, to absorb it, if not to annihilate it. Paul refused to make any concessions to these false brethren. As the conflict became more serious, an inner voice revealed to him that he should go to Jerusalem, appeal to the "pillars" of the metropolis, Peter, James, and John, and obtain from their lips the disavowal of an unrighteous and dangerous campaign. Since he wanted to do this with the assent of the church at Antioch, he arranged to appear at Jerusalem as the spokesman of all the brethren. He left in the company of Barnabas and of some disciples, among them a young uncircumcised Greek named Titus.

They crossed Phoenicia and Samaria. In each community they explained their gospel, their method of conversion, and the marvels which God had done "for them." They repeated this story untiringly and without pride, for the glory did not belong to them, but to the Spirit that guided them.

Approving rumours preceded them in the Holy City. On his arrival, Paul saw "those who were reputed to be somewhat," and first talked with each one separately. He did not put himself forward as a leader or a man inspired; he asked them whether by any chance he "should be running, or had run, in vain." He readily compared himself with a runner striving to win the prize in the stadium—and this Hellenic figure offended none but the old Jews who were hostile to everything from abroad. His persuasive clarity convinced Peter, James, and John. Since the vision at Joppa and the conversion of Cornelius, Peter was more amenable to innovations.

Nevertheless, the Judaizers now attacked the "pillars" as they had done with Paul at Antioch, calling upon them to declare themselves in favour of their thesis: "Ye circumcise a man . . . that the law of Moses may not be broken." Peter assembled the elders and gave his frank and dogmatic endorsement of Paul's principles:

"Brethren, ye know that a good while ago God made choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the heart, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and he made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. Now therefore why tempt ye

God, that ye should put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in like manner as they."

Evidently, his conversation with Paul had confirmed Peter in his conviction that God "put no difference" between the Jews and the converted pagans. He knew why Jesus had said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold." He recalled his remarks to the Pharisees, when he had rebuked them for their false traditions and hypocritical subtleties. Nevertheless he did not condemn the Law; nor was he formally opposed to circumcision. He maintained an attitude of prudence and compromise, as he desired unity and peace. He was more conservative than audacious, and already represented that moderating force in the church which was to become the property of the apostolic seat. Prior to his address, the assembly was divided and extremely agitated. After he had spoken, calm was restored. They listened to Barnabas' and Paul's defence of their apostleship. All the miracles wrought by their hands showed that they were following the right course; the Lord was surely with them. Their testimony moved an audience that was more susceptible to facts than to ideas. And, as no one failed to realize, these men had risked their lives for Christ. How deny them the authority of their example?

But at this point things took a decisive turn which stupefied their adversaries. James arose, "James, the Lord's brother," who was surnamed the Just. With his linen robe, his long hair and flowing beard, he resembled the man in white whom Ezekiel had seen tracing the sign of the Tau on the foreheads of those predestined to sal-

vation. Before the death of Jesus he had sworn that he would not eat bread from the hour when he had drunk of the cup of the Lord until he had seen him risen from the dead. And the Lord had appeared before him on the morning of the Passover, telling him to eat, for the "Son of Man be risen from the dead." He spent his life praying in the Temple, and had knelt so long that his knees were calloused like the knees of a camel. He was a Christian who had remained loyal to the Law: the good people looked upon him as the bulwark of orthodox tradition.

Now James, in his address, supported Paul and Barnabas in their main contention. "God," he reasoned, "did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name." Thus the Jews should "trouble not them which from among the Gentiles turn to God." By his injunction not to "trouble" them, he meant that circumcision should not be expected of them. But with realistic shrewdness, he added that they should be required to "abstain from the pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from what is strangled, and from blood."

These exactions would seem odd if we did not know one of the serious difficulties confronting the Church in groups where Jews and converted pagans met at table for the love-feasts. The converted pagans thought nothing of eating meats which had not been bled, whereas a Jew held them in horror. To absorb the blood of animals, even when it was mixed with other foods, was not only a violation of the Law of Moses; it meant the assimilation of something repugnant, since the souls of inferior creatures were thought to commingle with their blood. Any meat placed on the altar of an idol, or wine which had been used for libations, or any of the utensils

and fruits which had been made unclean by such wine were prohibited and execrable.

Converted pagans could not feel these aversions; but James required them to abstain from things which the Jews had abominated since the time of Moses and even of Noah. They would be exempted from circumcision, but in compensation they should join with their Israelite brethren in the observance of certain Mosaic regulations.

Along with these dietary restrictions, he offers a precept which appears to have a more general application. But it is doubtful whether he meant by fornication the moral laxity condemned by natural law, or the ritual turpitudes which Syria and Phrygia associated with the cults of Astarte, Atys, and many other divinities. Any catechumen, any one who had received baptism, knew that all such things were prohibited. James wanted to eliminate from the Christian communities all couples who were living in relationships reproved by Leviticus. For instance, he would forbid the cohabitation of nephew and aunt, of brother-in-law and sister-in-law; or still more, he would discountenance such false unions as Paul later stigmatized in the church of Corinth, which tolerated them without compunction—a man's marriage with a wife of his deceased father.

In attacking these scandals, James is upholding the Jewish tradition; at the same stroke he is furthering the morality of the Gospel. Paul could not help but applaud his proposals.

The elders approved of them, ratifying them in solemn assembly, and deciding to stabilize them in a collective message. They employed for this purpose an expression that was not imperative, but sovereign, "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us." Paul and

Barnabas were commissioned to bear this message to the believers of Antioch. And the better to emphasize its importance, several notables of Jerusalem went with them. Among others was Silas, a faithful coworker of Paul's who was planning to live at Antioch. There were indeed grounds to fear that the decision might cause murmurs among the Jewish Christians.

Paul had succeeded in gaining the acceptance of his views in their essential details. The Jews were left free to continue their national customs; but for the Gentiles the knife of the circumcisor disappeared—or nearly disappeared—from the Christian horizon. Five or six years later he wrote to the Galatians, who were being troubled by the Judaizers:

"And when they had known the grace that was given to me, James and Cephas and John, who seemed to be pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship: that we should go unto the Gentiles, and they unto the circumcision."

It has been asserted that Peter's words in the Acts deny this statement. Did not Peter also declare himself the Apostle to the Gentiles? As a matter of fact, neither Paul nor Peter ever claimed an exclusive territory. The situation was not like that of Abraham saying to Lot: "Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me; If thou wilt take the left hand, then will I go to the right; or if thou take the right hand, then I will go to the left." Peter had converted heathens, Paul Jews; and he would continue preaching in the synagogue so long as he was permitted to do so. But Peter, James, and John reserved the particular right to instruct circumcised Jews or pagans who had already submitted to circumcision; Paul was perfectly at liberty

to train Christians who were not circumcised. He advised Timothy, the son of a Greek and a converted Jewess, to comply with the traditional practice, so as not to scandalize the Jews of the locality.

While the Ebionite sectarians looked upon circumcision as a strict article of faith, the apostles, who possessed the unction of the Spirit and the pliancy of divine truth, made the varying ways of the Gospel converge upon one single purpose, the reign of the Lord Jesus. Thus, on leaving Jerusalem, Paul could honestly declare, "They, I say, who were of repute imparted nothing to me." They simply asked him to think of the *poor*. The saints of Jerusalem were still suffering from poignant need. In all his missions, Paul was to make collections for them, sending them clothing and provisions. These alms added a further bond of fraternal kindness to link the growing churches with the church which had engendered them.

But the decree which Paul and Barnabas discussed at Antioch, and doubtless throughout Syria, by no means ended the opposition of the Judaizers. The "false brethren . . . came in privately to spy our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into servitude." Soon afterwards, an event not even mentioned in the Acts proved how greatly their perfidious obstinacy endangered Christian unity. We learn of it from Paul himself, who felt that he should recall this painful conflict to the Galatians:

"But when Cephas came to Antioch, I resisted him to the face, because he stood condemned. For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he drew back and separated himself, fearing them that were of the circum-

cision. And the rest of the Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that even Barnabas was carried away with their dissimulation.

"But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Cephas before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest as do the Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, how compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? We being Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles. Yet knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, save through faith in Jesus Christ, even we believed on Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the law: because by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

"But if, while we sought to be justified in Christ, we ourselves also were found sinners, is Christ a minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build up again those things which I destroyed, I prove myself a transgressor. For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me. I do not make void the grace of God: for if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for nought."

A violent, inestimable scene. What would we not give to have Paul's own account of his life told in such accents!

We are hardly surprised to learn of this Judaizing movement which all but divided the community of Antioch. Circumcision, the Sabbath, and the observance of the legal foods all seemed untouchable matters, and

the prescribed concessions were not acceptable. The Jews interpreted the distinction between clean and unclean animals as a privilege, an evidence of the covenant between God and his people. They had strange symbolic reasons for clinging to the traditional precepts. Leviticus forbade the hare because this quadruped did not have a cloven hoof. The rabbis considered its meat unclean because it was thought to indulge in shameful habits. If brethren who were originally pagans invited a baptized Jew to eat of the hare, he was bound to feel an unconquerable revulsion.

Yet Peter, who recalled the vision of Joppa and the instructions of the Lord, partook of the common foods during the love-feasts. He thereby proved to the Gentiles that God has made all his creatures good; that all animals, like all the races of man, are blessed.

But some Jewish Christians arrived from Jerusalem and falsely declared that they had been sent by James. James had given his right hand to Paul and Barnabas; he had proposed the conciliatory decree concerning unbled meats; accordingly, any inquisitorial measures on his part would hardly be likely. But the retrogressive Judaizers aimed to spread their distrust under the aegis of his authority. They were indignant with Peter for his good-fellowship, and blamed him severely. With his somewhat fastidious righteousness, he was afraid to scandalize them. He gave up eating at the table of the *Gentiles;* the Jewish faction claimed him, and his example affected the others to such an extent that Barnabas himself followed it.

The Gentiles greatly resented this attitude. In avoiding them the apostles seemed to relegate them, like poor relatives, to an inferior place in the community. And

on one very important point they were contradicting practices which had been accepted since the decision at Jerusalem. If Peter, the saint to whom Jesus had said, "Feed my lambs," returned to Jewish customs, would the believers also have to "Judaize" if they wanted to become exemplary Christians?

Paul protested; it devolved upon him to voice their objections. He certainly had no desire to humiliate Peter; but he felt that the compromise into which the first of the Twelve was allowing himself to be drawn might, instead of allaying possible dissension, lead to schism; and this backward turn opened the door to serious weaknesses.

In order that his act should have its full effect, or rather, without reflecting, but prompted by inspiration, he questioned Peter in public, perhaps at the hour of the love-feast. He bluntly characterized his attitude as hypocritical. This severe word indicated at the same time that he and Peter were not at odds in their interpretation of the Gospel. Peter shared Paul's doctrines; he could not have held any other, since both men were dependent upon the same Spirit. But Peter had thought it better to make some concessions to the Jews in the matter of the ancient customs; Paul disillusioned him.

Nevertheless, at the close of his address he acknowledged the superiority of the Jews. One should not accuse Paul of pride or crudeness when he says before the Gentiles, "We being Jews by nature and not sinners of the Gentiles." Paul never forgets that he comes of a chosen race, the people of God; and in keeping with the simplicity of the times, he feels called upon to reaffirm this in the presence of the Gentiles themselves. For he does not want to be taken for a renegade; he

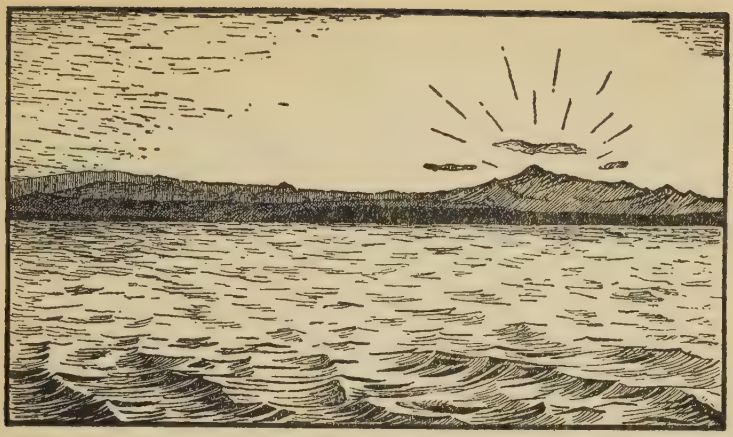
would never consent to be such, even when speaking of the Jews as "dogs" and "the concision." But when he proclaims the native prerogative of Israel, he is above human arrogance, above theocratic hauteur. As we have seen, in comparison with the knowledge of Christ and the gift of faith, he looked upon this grandeur according to the flesh as something to be cast "to the dogs."

He held like a lighted torch a truth that Peter did not dispute. If man were justified by the works of the Law, why the holy sufferings of Christ? The justice of the faith that he had earned for us would become false justice, a transgression. Christ would be a "minister of sin"! The intensity of his love drove the apostle's dialectic headlong into hyperbole; and his transport bursts forth in the fulminant words, "Yet I live, and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me."

Blessed be the error of Peter, since it unchained such sublimity! We here touch in Paul what we might call the paroxysm of Christian zeal: at the same time his words express vehement indignation. Here is an overflowing personality, rising against all the others and hurling at them the defiant statement that he alone is in the right. Then, with absolute renunciation, with supreme humility, "I have been crucified with Christ." Mystery of an incredible equilibrium between hauteur and abasement, between an ego exalted in plenitude and a self-forgetfulness carried to the point of martyrdom. An apparent breach of unity that served the very purpose of preserving unity! Even while expostulating with Peter, Saint Paul remains quite the opposite of a heretic; he pays homage to Peter's supremacy. In advance he refutes Luther, to whom Renan and the German exegetists have treacherously compared him.

How did Peter act during and following this reprimand? We know the simplicity and goodness of this great soul. It would not be imprudent to suppose that he was astonished and humbled, and that, rising and running to Paul, he embraced him with tears of joy.

The future of Christianity hardly seems dependent upon a matter of diet and a question of seating at table. Nevertheless, a slight deviation now could grow to enormous proportions later. As the Gospel had to be universal, the strictly Judaic observations must be eliminated. The tree which had sprouted from a tiny seed felt the impulse to grow until it might shelter all the birds of the heavens. The Jews claimed to enclose it within the parvis of the Temple, walling it in without air. Paul was predestined to make these confining barriers crumble into ruins—and neither Peter, nor Barnabas, nor any of the others of his apostolic band had been commissioned to rebuild all that God had undone by their hands.



X

MARCHING TOWARDS THE WEST

PAUL AMONG THE GALATIANS

For all his vehemence, Paul had been so clearly in the right that both Barnabas and Peter forgave him. And shortly afterwards, he said to Barnabas, "Let us return now and visit the brethren in every city wherein we proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they fare."

Behind this seemingly abrupt proposal there were other motives than the need of a change or a desire to avoid the difficulties which his intractable attitude had made for him among the Judaizers of Antioch. As we have remarked, it was his custom, and the common custom of all Christian missionaries, to revisit the churches after their establishment. In this respect an apostle's life resembled that of a provincial prelate, who is incessantly on the move, going from convent to con-

vent in the interests of harmony, good practices, and fervour.

Thus Paul wanted to cross Cyprus again with Barnabas; then they made a second visit to the churches of Pamphylia, Lycaonia, and Phrygia. They had plans for a wider itinerary. Paul thought of northern Galatia, Bithynia, and Mysia. For the rest, the secret and unfailing Voice would tell him which road he should take and which one he should leave behind.

But a strange quarrel must have disturbed their departure. John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas, had come to Antioch from Jerusalem, and Barnabas wanted him to accompany them. Paul was opposed to this acolyte. In the course of their first mission John Mark abandoned them, "went not with them to the work." Motives of which we know nothing made Paul severe, though he was by no means rancorous.

Barnabas, who was somewhat irritated, became insistent. Paul remained obdurate, and they quarreled. Probably still other grievances contributed to their dispute. It was not of long standing, however; for later, when Paul wrote to the Corinthians from Ephesus, he spoke of Barnabas in a fraternal tone, referring to him as a coworker.

For the time, Barnabas separated from Paul and departed with John Mark. They embarked at Seleucia, and at Cyprus they resumed the work which they had begun in conjunction with Paul. Paul took Silas as his companion. After leaving Antioch, they passed through Syria and Cilicia. Churches arose in these two provinces; it was apparently to Paul that they owed their vigour. From Tarsus they crossed the Taurus en route for Lycaonia.

We should like to be able to follow the apostle and his companions along the mountain road, at the foot of long slopes that rise into the burning sky, between the walls of rock lashed by the winter rains since the beginning of time. Above all, we should like to halt with them in a little spot near a tree and a spring, before one of those shelters where the caravans meet—at this very stable with the low entrance, and in this same big room beneath the roof. The asses, relieved of their packs, the camels, and the little horses of the steppes all roamed about grazing where they would. Guinea-hens were calling; drivers were shouting and cracking their whips. The innkeeper placed wooden stools beneath the tree for the important travellers, and washed their feet at the fountain. Paul gathered information about the districts towards which he was heading. To the Jewish pedlars, soldiers, and camel drivers, he spoke of the Kingdom of God.

The Roman road was undoubtedly better than the present Turkish one, with its ruts and washouts. But it too had to make its way alongside the abyss and the seething, roaring torrent. In spots it was easy to descend and quench one's thirst at the clear sheet of water which filtered among the rocks. *De torrente in via bibet; propterea exaltabit caput.* The chasm of humility and splendour which was laid open by the story of Christ was enigmatically repeated in a site fashioned by the hand of God alone. Below lay the shadows, the endless groanings of the creation in travail; above was the silence of the radiant peaks with pines rising here and there like lance-tips in the sun, while hawks soared beneath a gleaming cloud.

When Paul reached the spot where the two formi-

dable walls closed in like the gates of a dam, with no apparent egress, he could liken it to the rigid strictures by which the Law blocked the future of mankind. Nevertheless, the caravan found a way through, and climbed higher towards the freedom of the "children of the light," before dropping again into the broad green plain which glistened with patches of bluish water and in the springtime stretched out like the pastures of the Good Shepherd.

He saw again the Lycaonian churches at Derbe and Lystra. In the latter city he knew a young disciple who was destined to become his "beloved and faithful child in the Lord." Timothy had a Greek father, but his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice were Jewesses, doubtless converted at the time of the first mission. Ever since Timothy's childhood they had instructed him in the Holy Scriptures. Paul's letters allow us to see that he was of a delicate complexion, a timid and sensitive nature, and charming character.

Timothy had not been circumcised as a child; as the son of a Jewess, he should have been; Paul wanted him to undergo this legal initiation "because of the Jews who were in those places." He intended to make Timothy one of his party. And he now recalled only too well that the Jews had all but destroyed his work and caused his own death. He was anxious to avoid anything that might further provoke them against him. He also hoped to make it clear that, though he did make war on the Judaizers, he was not the sworn enemy of the Law.

In every city he visited, he spread the news of the decree of Jerusalem like a peace-pact between Jews and Gentiles, and for several centuries this arrangement,

which was a kind of concordat, remained a respected charter for the Christians of Asia. As an evidence of loyalty to these traditional principles, the famous Epistle of the churches of Lyons and Vienna records with satisfaction that a martyr named Biblis, *a woman of Asia,* who had apostatized under torture, recovered possession of herself and cried to the pagans:

"What, you would claim that we eat children, when we are not even allowed to eat the blood of animals?"

After leaving Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia, Paul went towards the north, with the intention of penetrating Bithynia. The Galatians were on his route; and this explains how people of Gallic blood, barbarian Celts, received the revelation of the faith twenty years after the death of Christ.

The Galatians were descended from a band of adventurers who had come from the banks of the Garonne and had advanced as far as Thessaly. When halted at Thermopylae, they had taken to the sea and ravaged the shores of Asia Minor. They were driven towards the interior, where they stormed the Phrygian villages of Ancyra and Pessinus. They finally settled beyond the river Sangarius, grouped in three tribes, as in their country of origin. The tribe that Paul evangelized was called the Tolstibolges; and one of its cities to the south of Pessinus was Tolosichorion, or Toulouse. When Augustus united northern Galatia with Phrygia and Lycaonia, he reduced these regions to a single province. Jewish colonies were scattered among the Galatians, as everywhere.

In Phrygia these Celts had found mystical propensities which harmonized with their own. The violence of love and the madness of sacrifice were exalted in the

bloody rites of Cybele. At her temple in Pessinus the devotees, while dancing and shrieking, mutilated themselves. Is it not hard to see how the Judaizers might persuade the Galatians to inflict themselves with circumcision?

Paul's eloquence and his doctrine astounded them. As they were given to enthusiasm, they were converted en masse. He did not intend to stop here, but while passing through the country he fell sick. The people overwhelmed him with care and affection.

"That which was a temptation to you in my flesh," he subsequently wrote to them with tenderness, "ye despised not, nor rejected: but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. . . . For I bear you witness, that, if it could be done, you would have plucked out your own eyes, and would have given them to me."

This proverbial hyperbole has led to the conclusion that Paul was suffering from purulent ophthalmia. But eye-diseases are so common in the Orient that contact with such a malady would hardly have constituted a "trial" for the Galatians. It is more likely that he had some intense fever, with violent and contagious eruption, like smallpox.

Paul never forgot the devotion of the good Galatians. But he was also to suffer from their inconstancy. His doctrines had intoxicated them, but when the Judaizers came after him and distorted his gospel, the Galatians were readily taken in. From the example of Timothy they concluded that the apostle himself advocated circumcision. Such instability angered him. "O senseless Galatians," he exclaimed, "who hath bewitched you?" And his words seem to stretch across time as well as distance, assailing the verbiage and false generosity of all

those in the West who pride themselves on their modernity.

AT PHILIPPI. THE TESTIMONY OF THE BLOOD

He had passed through the country of the Galatians with the intention of founding a church in Bithynia. The Spirit turned him aside. God had selected other missionaries for this province: in his report to Trajan sixty years later, Pliny found himself forced to admit, "This superstition (the Christian faith) has won over not only the cities, but also the small towns and the rural districts."

Paul veered to the east, through Mysia, along the valley of the Scamander, past the tufted slopes of the majestic Ida, and down to the sea. He halted at Troas, Alexandria Troas. According to Suetonius, Julius Caesar had thought of restoring the empire to its eastern origins by transferring the capital to this port. Caesar did not suspect that the spiritual and eternal empire of Rome would actually begin in the old Orient.

While at Troas, Paul was perhaps the guest of Carpus, the generous Greek at whose home he left his cloak on a third voyage.[1]

At this point in his course he could choose one of two routes. He could either go on towards the cities of Asia, such as Ephesus and Miletus, or set sail for Hellas. He prayed the Lord to show him his way. A vision answered him. A man appeared to him in a dream wrapped in a chlamys and wearing a high wide-brimmed hat. Paul recognized that he was a Macedonian, and this stranger

[1] II Tim. IV, 13. "The cloak that I left at Troas, with Carpus, when thou comest bring with thee."

said to him in a suppliant tone, "Come over unto Macedonia and help us." On awaking, Paul told his dream. His companions all agreed that Christ was calling upon them to bring the Gospel to the Macedonians.

Thus Paul followed no strict plan in the course of his missions. He went to one place or another, depending upon the possibilities that suggested themselves on the way, and upon the chances of success; above all he was attentive to the invisible Guide who went before him.

At Troas there emerges for the first time among the members of Paul's band (the "we" of the narrative) a companion whom he had most likely brought from Antioch. This was Luke, "the most dear physician," who would be found near him, even at Rome. Through being a witness of Paul's exploits, Luke was qualified to become his historian. It would be useless to disclose why he preferred to efface himself during the greater part of his narrative, and to come forward on occasion. The "we" appears at the moment when Paul was about to leave Troas, but the manner in which it is introduced leads us to believe that the author had previously been travelling with the apostle. It disappears a page later, then returns in Chapter XX, when Paul again visits Troas; it is continued until they reach Jerusalem, and it reappears in the account of the sea voyage and the shipwreck at Malta. One might suppose that the author is drawing on a logbook, a set of memoranda, his immediate notes which he had not had the time to fuse with his other documents.

From the wharf of Troas, at the foot of the colonnade where steps are still visible, Paul lifted anchor to begin the conquest of Europe. In all respects he rode before the wind.

A single day of sailing brought the vessel into the vicinity of Samothrace, where the shadow of the fatidic mount falls across the sea. Beside the cataracts in the northwestern part of the island, the temples of the Cabiri were hidden. The ceremonies of initiation at these sanctuaries were so terrible that the mere thought of them would suggest the aversion of a daemonic presence to Paul and his disciples.

The next day they touched at the harbour of Neapolis (today Caralla). This city was the terminus of the great Roman road, the Via Egnatia, which ran like a sharp furrow from Dyrrachium through Illyria, Thrace, and Macedonia.

Paul set out for Philippi, three and a half leagues beyond Mount Pangaeus. Here he succeeded in becoming acquainted with the Macedonian peasants, men who were upright, primitive, and devout. Renan adroitly credits them with "a certain trait of childlike simplicity which prepared the way for the Gospel." As a matter of fact, a people who were so industrious and so jealous of tradition would have tended on the contrary to repel any religion that interfered with their customs and imposed a superhuman ideal upon them. The prompt spread of the Gospel was by no means a "humanly inevitable fact." It is prodigious that the Christian principle did not founder beneath the persistence of the old cults and succumb to the spirit of the mysteries. With their promise of apparent moral uplift and salvation, and their *appeal as secret gatherings*, they would necessarily confront the new dogma as a hostile force or a factor making for the deterioration of the faith. Could the crucified Jesus, who would drive away the other gods, seem less like an intruder, less execrable or worthy

of scorn, just because the Macedonians had Orphic leanings and worshipped the god Sabazios?

Since the time of Augustus, Philippi had been a colony of veterans. Among these Latin-speaking people Paul could have made the most of his *jus civile*. But in keeping with his invariable practice, he first sought an Israelite audience.

For their ritual ablutions, the Jews chose a quiet spot near a stream or the sea; they would find some simple sheltered place to meet and pray in. This oratory in the open air was called a *proseuche*. On the Sabbath day Paul left the city with Silas and Luke, and went along the Gangites, expecting to discover a pious gathering somewhere on its banks. They did in fact come upon a rustic parvis where a number of "those fearing God," most of them women, were singing psalms. They sat down near them and spoke to them of the *Kingdom*. One of them was named Lydia, as she came from Thyatira in Lydia; she was a rich merchant, "a seller of purple." As she listened to Paul, she was transported and her "heart the Lord opened to give heed unto the things which were spoken by Paul." The event was one of simple and marvellous sweetness. She desired to be baptized along with "her household," her workers, her slaves. Then she said to the missionaries:

"If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come unto my house and abide there."

At first they demurred; but she was very insistent in her plea, and they became the hosts of Lydia.

Western Christianity had its first church in the house of a seller of purple. The colour of the glorious blood was thus to be magnified; and here at Philippi, on European soil, Paul and Silas were to offer Christ, as a liba-

tion, the first drops of their blood. Some days later, as they were returning to the oratory, a young girl came to meet them on the road, and holding out her hands in frenzy, she cried out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, which proclaim unto you the way of salvation."

They quickened their steps, embarrassed by the fury of this homage. She pursued them, repeating her profession of faith madly. They learned that she was a soothsayer; she saw things which were happening elsewhere and foretold the future, and her prophecies came true. It was said that she had a "python-spirit"; she spoke in two voices, as though there were another person living within her. People gave her money; several people had entered into partnership to exploit the prestige of this "medium."

Each time that Paul and Silas returned, she would again cry out. Paul realized that she was possessed by demons. Demons understood the mission of the apostles, just as the devil had confessed at the passage of Jesus, "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." Paul was disturbed by her outcries and angered at hearing himself praised by unclean spirits; and he wanted to save the unfortunate girl, who was perhaps begging for her deliverance. He stopped, fixed his eyes upon her, and in a terrible voice he commanded the demon, "I charge thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her."

The spirit "came out that very hour." But she immediately lost her prophetic gifts. When the men who had her in charge discovered this, and she told them what had happened to her, they were furious. They accosted Paul and Silas in the street, insulted them, hurled themselves upon them, and dragged them to the market-

place before the duumvirs, or magistrates. They were careful not to express their real grievance; Roman law was severe with sorcerers. To justify themselves, they alleged that their violence was due to an offence against public order—"These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, and set forth customs which it is not lawful for us to receive, or to observe, being Romans."

They confused, or pretended to confuse, these Christians with the Jews. The Romans granted the Jews freedom of worship, but they looked with an unfriendly eye upon the proselytism of the Oriental cults. The emperors, especially Claudius, boasted of a rigid fidelity to the national gods.

The offence was proved without difficulty; the crowd thronged about the tribunal; witnesses asserted that some strangers were preaching a new superstition. The magistrates did not even question the accused; Paul and his disciple, it seems, kept silent. They could have announced that they were Roman citizens, for Silas was one as well as Paul. They preferred to suffer, content to resemble Christ Jesus.

They were handed over to the lictors, who rent their garments and beat them until they bled. Almost naked, with the marks of the blows upon them, they were led to the prison, where they were cast into a dungeon. Their wounded legs were bound with cords and placed in stocks. Their cell, like all Roman gaols, was a dank, nauseous cellar, low-ceilinged and windowless. Paul and Silas were left there as though condemned to death, spiders, rats, and other hideous creatures keeping them company. There were more prisoners, however, on the floor above or in an adjoining chamber—and towards midnight they heard strange things.

The two men locked in the dungeon were singing; their voices rose like a solemn, supplicant, and powerful hymn. An unaccountable joy pervaded their psalm. What God were they calling from the depths of the shadows? Suddenly the earth trembled violently, so that the building was shaken to its foundations. All the doors opened, and all the prisoners felt their chains drop from them. Paul and Silas found themselves standing upright; their legs had been freed of their shackles, they knew not how. They mounted the stairs. The gaoler, who had been asleep in his room with full confidence in the bolted doors, awoke at the sound of the shock. When he saw the cells open, he thought that the prisoners had fled. In despair he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, but Paul rushed up to him, crying in a joyful, imperious tone, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here."

The man then called for lights and hurried into the prison. He found the captives freed, praying with outstretched arms. Realizing that a miracle had occurred, he fell trembling at their feet, as though they were gods. The gleam of a divine illumination overwhelmed him. He obeyed an impulse which he did not yet understand. He led them outside the gaol and said to them:

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

The apostles responded:

"Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved, thou and thy house."

And they repeated the word of God to him, and to all that were in his house. In the courtyard of the prison, the gaoler washed the blood of their wounds from their bodies. Paul and Silas moistened the foreheads of the gaoler, his wife and children, with the water which washes away all stains. Then they entered his house,

where he served them food; here they doubtless broke the bread of life together; and he and his family rejoiced because they had faith in the true God.

However, as the saints feared that they might place him in a difficult position, they went back to their cell. But during the evening some of Paul's friends must have interceded with the magistrates, who sent sergeants at dawn bearing the order, "Let these men go." The gaoler ran to announce the good news to the two prisoners. "Come forth," he said, "and go in peace." Paul asked to speak to the sergeants, and the effect of his words was as dramatic as the miracle in the night, "They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men that are Romans, and have cast us into prison; and do they now cast us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and bring us out."

The praetors were horrified on hearing that they had treated two Roman citizens like nobodies. By the Lex Porcia they were liable to the penalty of death. They came hastily and humbly to offer their excuses. They set Paul and Silas free, not without entreating them to leave the city. They were too apprehensive of a new incident! Paul and his companion refused to comply immediately; they went to Lydia's, where they saw all the brethren and exhorted them. Then they departed.

No historian has discredited Paul's tribulations at Philippi. When writing to the Philippians, the apostle recalls "the same conflict which ye saw in me"; he speaks of it as a veteran referring to some honourable and well-known encounter.

But the episode of the earthquake and the miraculous unloosening of the chains was bound to invite the sar-

casm of sceptical commentators. Wellhausen has waxed crudely jocose over the exceptional fact that Paul and Silas were awake at midnight, while the gaoler alone was sleeping. Yet when one stops to consider, the detail has nothing unlikely about it. Sleep would come tardily to prisoners who were frightfully fettered, and were stretched out on damp slabs of stone or among filth and vermin. And they would be disturbed and awakened by the slightest sound. M. Loisy, who seems to have forgotten that the courtyard of the prison contained a fountain, asks why the same water serves "for the gaoler to wash the scars of the missionaries and for the missionary to baptize the gaoler and his family."

A spirit of good faith easily clears away such puerile objections. Two other circumstances are more vague. When the prisoners have felt their chains drop away, and once their stupor is past, what do they do? Do they not rush out in derangement or in the hope of fleeing? The gaoler does not seem to pay the least attention to them. In the utter darkness, Paul hears the gaoler despairing, and realizes that he is about to run himself through with his sword. But how can he feel justified in assuring him, "We are all here"?

The narrator abridges the essentials, and neglects the rest. It is not a sufficient solution to suppose that moonlight came into the cells through a vent-hole. In order for everything to be explainable, an element of mystery, an invisible Presence, must be taken into account. There are angels here. They do not intervene to lead Paul and Silas from the prison, as they had done in releasing Peter. But they impose a stupor upon the prisoners in such a way that no one dreams of taking flight. The Spirit is

revealed to Paul. The miracle seems preponderantly of a moral and symbolic order. The loosened chains represent the liberation of the soul through faith; and the sudden conversion of the gaoler demonstrates the supernatural efficacy of the torments endured by the servants of God. The baptism and the incidents which follow it display the same ingenuous simplicity as the scene with Lydia and the invitation tendered by this good soul to the messengers of Christ.

Lastly, should we be surprised if Paul receives the sergeants proudly, and declares his status as a Roman citizen after having remained silent the day before? Paul acts above all in the interests of the greatest good; he is anything but a man of system. In this matter, his conduct is elucidated for us if we consider conditions in the Orient today, and recall the traditional practices of Roman praetors. Nothing could be less out of the ordinary than the magistrates' brutal treatment of the two defenceless strangers. And as soon as these functionaries learned what risks they were incurring, their grovelling equalled their former insolence. Paul and Silas could enter a complaint against them, but are satisfied with apologies. Paul does insist upon these, however, since he realizes the unfavourable effect which an unrighted wrong would have upon the young church of the Gentiles and the future of his mission.

He is now acquainted with Roman harshness from experience. He is about to advance into a hostile country. He exhibits a safe-conduct which he will employ only in extreme cases. His true identity will always remain that of a Hebrew and the son of a Hebrew. But he will be known everywhere as a Roman citizen.

At Philippi, meanwhile, he has tasted the first-fruits

of martyrdom beneath the rods of the lictors. "Thrice was I beaten with rods," he told the Corinthians. The flagellation at Philippi is the only one of the three mentioned in the Acts. Yet there is still another that tradition should consecrate. Just before he was beheaded at Rome, Paul's body was again torn with rods. By a final touch of irony, his very title as a citizen was flagellated.

XI

PAUL AND THE JEWS OF THESSALONICA

On leaving Philippi, and following the Via Egnatia, Paul, Silas, and their companions passed beneath the triumphal arch that commemorated the defeat of the republicans under Brutus and Cassius. What meaning could a battle already eighty years past have for the apostles whose thoughts were bent on eternal ends? The only peace that was not a myth was a kind of peace the Caesars could never give; and this he was bringing to all nations in the name of the Lord Jesus.

They went through Amphipolis above the banks of the Strymon, and Apollonia near Lake Bolbe. In some places the stone road cut across steppes and through wooded valleys; in others it wound among the ridges of arid hills worn away by thousands of years of erosion. Did Stagira make them think of the philosopher of the Ethics? It is quite possible, as Paul was not un-

acquainted with the name of Aristotle nor with his conception of form and matter.

On approaching Thessalonica, they climbed heights which are now bare and savage. From here they could see the city with its sloping gardens, its temples, basilicas and immense docks. The port was enclosed within the horns of two promontories. And directly opposite, Olympus (soon to become the aerial sepulchre of the defunct gods) seemed to overhang the sea, with its snow-clad summit wreathed in clouds.

Thessalonica was then the capital of Macedonia, and was a free city despite the domination of Rome. It bore the name of a woman who had been loved by Cassander, the son of Antipater. Like Salonica today, it was a melting-pot of religions and races, one of the most swarming of the great Mediterranean dives. Here, as elsewhere, commerce was in the hands of wealthy Jews and Greeks. Many of the poorer Jews were engaged in petty trades like weaving, as they still are to this day.

In going there Paul was looking for work, and he found more than he could do. He stayed with a Jew who was called Jesus, but who had changed his name to that of a Greek hero: Jason. Perhaps he was the Jason, or a relative of the Jason, whom Paul mentions towards the close of his Epistle to the Romans.

The Jews had a large synagogue at Thessalonica. On the Sabbath Paul came to speak there. He explained the mystery of the Scriptures; with the books of the prophets in his hand, he showed that Christ was destined to suffer and rise again from the dead, and that he was the true Messiah. Certain Israelites were convinced, but Paul especially influenced some monotheistic Greeks and

some women who belonged to the leading families of the city.

As at Antioch of Pisidia, Philippi, and in many other places, the catechumens were not at first recruited from among the ignorant masses. Christ's teachings attracted cultivated pagans and gentle-hearted women who were thrilled by the appeal of an heroic and virtuous life whereby they might give and receive without stint. Then the charity of the apostle, the example set by himself and by the God whom he taught, readily led them to value the poor. In them they nourished and clothed Jesus Christ; to them they communicated the joy of salvation. The most humble of the brethren took part in the breaking of the bread. During the communion of the mystery, at least, no distinctions between wealth and poverty were recognized.

But it seemed a futile kind of madness to preach distrust of money and abstinence from pleasure in a city of merchants and courtesans that was devoted to the cult of Aphrodite and replete with the vertigo of the appetites. It was a miracle that a church could subsist and grow in holiness among such conditions.

The first Epistle sent from Corinth to the Thessalonians gives us a picture of the missionary's marvellous energy, his torments, his tenderness and his power of persuasion.

He did not merely preach the Gospel; he *lived* it. He worked "night and day," so as not to be a burden to any one. In the shop where he wove, while busy at the loom he explained the ways of the Lord. He tried to be simple, that the simple might understand him. He took the neophytes aside one by one and exhorted them "as when a nurse cherisheth her own children." Since he

would willingly give his life for their souls, he could tell them everything, and make full demands upon their faith. The word which he was spreading was not his own, but God's. He confirmed it by healing the sick, or by the spiritual attributes with which the believers were endowed. He prepared them for persecution, and he soon had the opportunity to show them that he himself knew how to suffer.

The dissenting Jews, who were irritated by his doctrines and observed the pagan majority in the church with apprehension, formed a conspiracy. They went about the quays and public squares collecting beggars, porters out of work, the seaport rabble which is always looking for odd jobs and excitement. A gang went to make a demonstration in front of Jason's house. They demanded Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Happily the missionaries were not there. The Jews had the audacity to seize Jason and some brethren whom they stopped along the road. They dragged them before the city magistrates, the "rulers of the city."

"These that have turned the world upside down," they clamored, "are come hither also; . . . and these all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus."

These Jews brought the same charge against Paul's disciples as they had successfully brought against Jesus: they accused them of being seditionaries guilty of lese-majesty, hoping in this way to intimidate the magistrates, who were always afraid of displeasing the central authorities. And the "rulers of the city" were greatly impressed. What king was this whose empire would never fall, and who would come in triumph to judge the peoples?

Nevertheless, Jason was known to be a respectable and law-abiding citizen; he defended himself with vigour. The magistrates released him and the others, though not without placing them under bail for safety's sake.

Would Paul's enemies admit defeat? If they wanted to put an end to his scandalous doctrines, they had but to assassinate him. The faithful must have foreseen such an attack, as they begged Paul to depart. It was one of Paul's saddest moments, but he did not resist, too well aware that the Jews would be implacable. As spies watched his comings and goings, he and Silas left the city at night, escorted by some of the brethren.

Beyond the Vardar they proceeded towards the mountains. Two days' march through a difficult region where there were torrents to be crossed brought them to the plateau of Berea, a country of cascades and splendid forests, above a plain cut by aqueducts.

We now have reason to admire Paul's constancy, for at Berea he entered the synagogue, as he had done everywhere. He began by showing that all the Scriptures prefigure Jesus; and this time his perseverance was rewarded. He not only converted Gentiles, "Greek women of honourable estate," disgusted with the baseness of paganism. A large number of bona fide Jews opened their hearts to his words, and examined the prophets to see whether the apostle's testimony was in harmony with them. The Jewish race was blind, and still is blind, on this one point. They did not want to understand the prophecies, and to acknowledge a humiliated, expiatory Messiah. Where Isaiah, Zechariah, and others only too clearly defined the man of sorrow, the rabbis insisted upon seeing nothing but a symbolic picture of Israel's calamities.

The Jews of Berea consoled Paul for his failure at Thessalonica. But the Thessalonians soon learned that he was at Berea founding a church attended by Jews. The synagogues sent agitators who did their best to slander and vilify the apostle. The populace was on the verge of an uprising; perhaps they were about to stone Paul or to massacre him. Once again he had to flee, leaving Timothy and Silas at Berea to continue the miraculous work without him.

The most painful thing of all was the realization that the combined synagogues of Thessalonica were rabidly persecuting the Christians, particularly the baptized Jews. When writing to the Thessalonians, he was by no means silent concerning his feeling of excessive bitterness against the Jews, "Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and the prophets, and have persecuted us, and please not God, and are adversaries to all men. Prohibiting us to speak to the Gentiles, that they may be saved, to fill up their sins always: for the wrath of God is come upon them to the end."

Did he foresee the ruin of Jerusalem, and all the punishments that would befall the "stiffnecked people" in the course of centuries? He knew the predictions of Jesus; but he thought further of the inner disgrace, that supernatural obstinacy, which would cease towards the end of time.

When would this come? With his whole heart he awaited it and hoped for it. He wanted the world to behold the resplendent evidence by which he himself had been enlightened. Yes, when would the Lord Jesus appear "with the angels of his power: in a flame of fire, giving vengeance to them who know not God, and who

obey not the gospel. When he shall come to be glorified in his saints."

Paul knew but one thing concerning the time of the Advent: "The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night." Nevertheless, the primitive church admitted certain annunciatory signs: and the facts concerning this great mystery which he had taught at Thessalonica doubtless derived from the common tradition.

"Let no man deceive you by any means, for unless there come a revolt first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition, who opposeth, and is lifted up above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself as if he were God."

Some invisible person was delaying the advent of the man "without law." But the obstacle would be removed for a time, and the ungodly would manifest himself through signs and false prodigies, with all the seductions of iniquity. Then the Lord Jesus would annihilate him by the glory of his Coming.

Like all the first Christians even down to the time of Cyprian and later, Paul's disciples believed in the near possibility of the Parousia. The Jews who had never forgotten the passage of the destroyer in Egypt during the night of the Passover, thought that the Messiah would choose that night to manifest himself. They handed the same notion on to the Christians. According to Saint Jerome, on the eve of Easter the believers remained in the church until midnight, trembling with a hope which, among the less eager, became heavy with anxiety. Was this to be the end of pain and sin, the end of God's silence, and also the end of earthly joys? When midnight was past, they said to one another, "No,

not yet." And they turned cheerfully to the festival of the Lord's Resurrection.

When the persecutions were at their height, the idea that the triumph of the righteous would not be long in coming greatly strengthened the courage of the martyrs. The judges in their interrogatories asked this ironic question:

"If Jesus be risen from the dead, *why does he not show himself to all?*"

The Christians dared to answer:

"His return is near; *you will see him.*"

Saint John heard the great cry of the dead, of all those who gave their life in witness, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and revenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

But there was a popular illusion spreading which the doctors immediately saw to be dangerous. Some loquacious or overly excitable people were going about saying that the end of the world was imminent. At Thessalonica after Paul's departure, some rash words and even an Epistle on this subject were attributed to him. The indolent folded their arms, ranted and begged. "Why work," they said, "if everything is about to be destroyed?" Visionaries and charlatans started wild rumours. People were anxious to know what would be the fate of the living on the day of the Parousia, whether they would enter the Kingdom before the dead.

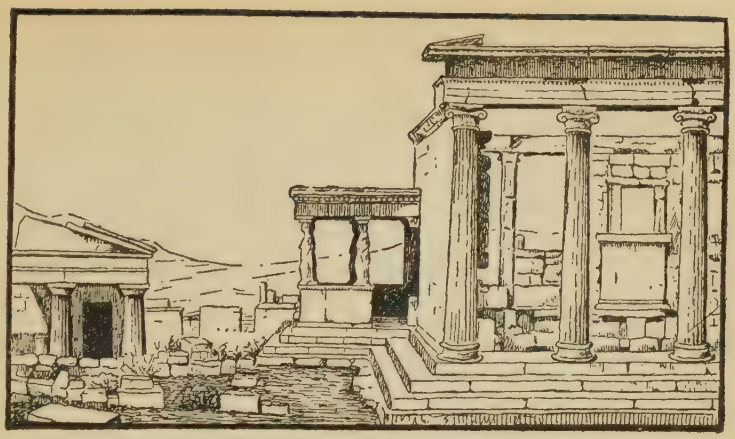
When Paul at Corinth learned of this excitement, he hastened to write the Thessalonians and to remind them of the truth as he taught it.

For the time being he was again a fugitive, on the road to Athens; he might be called the *wandering Jew* of apostleship; as his enemies drove him on, with every

step he took they advanced the Gospel. The churches of Thessalonica and Berea were not to die, and the church of Corinth was to be born.

It is not at all certain whether he embarked at Methone and reached Athens by sea. He took the coast road, but he might finally have mounted towards the passes of Thessaly. "They that conducted Paul," says the Acts, "brought him as far as Athens." The words would be unusual if they referred to a sea voyage.

In passing through Thermopylae one autumn evening, I was strangely moved at the thought that the apostle may have gone by these epic gorges; and indeed, I recognized there the double aspect of his life. Down below was the bed of a torrent, hemmed in between the two sombre slopes of the mountain; then came the abrupt ridges, with sparse shrubbery, and red-leaved oaks which seemed to be on fire, and jagged peaks, and inaccessible eagles' nests; and above our heads an immense twilight stretched out, golden as fine honey, and spreading to the sea. Above all the violence of transitory struggles lay regions which were peaceful and divine.



XII

THE SPEECH OF THE AREOPAGUS

IF Paul had been the Hellenist that some claim him to be, he could not have set foot on Attic soil and penetrated the sanctuary of Hellenism without succumbing to admiration and a secret sense of delight. But Athens displeased him greatly. This august city weighed him down with sadness; "his spirit was stirred within him."

At first he found himself there alone, in hostile solitude. Timothy had rejoined him, but at the news of the hardships which the Christians were enduring at Thessalonica, Paul "could no longer forbear"; he sent his disciple to his beloved Thessalonians, for he was greatly distressed at the thought that he could not see them again himself. Timothy would comfort them and keep them united in hope and charity.

Why, during Timothy's absence, was Paul a prey to such distress that he felt the need of mentioning it specifically? It seems that he had to pass through a

stage of acute exhaustion which all the saints must face at one time or another, a period of trial which gives new strength to their trust and humility. How uncertain his results seemed after such strenuous efforts! He trembled for the churches that he had been forced to abandon when he had taught them so little; he was afraid, as he wrote to the Thessalonians, "lest perhaps he that tempteth should have tempted you, and our labour should be made vain."

His isolation at Athens heightened his unrest. This city, more than any other, made him realize the enormous gravity of the pagan opposition. In this veritable Pantheon the idols were at home; here they were tranquil, triumphant, and innumerable. There were temples in every street, and statues beneath every portico, all the way from the gates to the Ceramicus. How many Zeuses, Pallases, Bacchuses, Aphrodites! Above the Ceramicus stood the temple of Hephaestos; and near by was that of the Aphrodite Urania sculptured by Phidias from a block of Parian marble. On the street of the Tripods—the satyr of Praxiteles. Towards the theatre—another Bacchus. Between the theatre and the Acropolis—the temples of Aesculapius and Themis, Ge Kourotrophos and Demeter Chloe. And eponymous heroes, and illustrious men, and allegorical deities. In the agora—the altar of Pity, a goddess worshipped by the Athenians alone.

Towards her Paul must have instinctively felt some measure of indulgence. But he considered the goddess herself as quite pitiable. In worshipping an *idea*, when one can approach the life eternal and live in the Principle from which this idea originates, in situating within

oneself the union of God and man "by whom and for whom all things were created," one would still be vowing himself to darkness and would be rejecting God.

Paul was distressed to see the Athenians so profoundly attached to their legends of the false gods and the pomp of their liturgies, for this made it all the more difficult to convert them. He was offended at the sight of their processions and unending festivals. The Pharisee in him abhorred even the "shadow of the shadow of an idol." He was annoyed by the formal beauty of the statues, since it furbished a lie with a keener semblance of truth. An object's one possible appeal to him lay in its likeness to Christ, the image of the Father, the real and absolute God whose human features he had beheld.

Nevertheless, one day when he had gone down to the old port of Phalerum or to Munychia, he noticed an altar-stone bearing an inscription, "To the unknown God." The devout had also wished to gain the favour of some strange god, to whom, though they did not know his name, they paid homage and made offerings. And in their piety they believed that they would at least avert the wrath of occult Powers otherwise neglected.

To Paul's mind, these idolaters were unwittingly making a place for the one God whom they were seeking at heart, since he awaited them. This discovery brought him great reassurance. He had already observed that the doctrines of paganism in its purer aspects were leading in the direction of the Unknown, who remained difficult to understand without the aid of the revelation. But henceforth he saw more clearly where the disordered efforts of Greek philosophy might lead under Christian guidance. It was apparently the mission of Hellas to

turn the soul towards the search for a suprasensible God. Though he could not reconcile himself to Athens, he preached there in hope.

At first he spoke on the Sabbath, in the synagogue. The Jewish colony of Athens, which had little influence, refrained from stirring up disorder, but as it hardly seemed to understand his message, he addressed himself directly to the pagans.

Athens had been devoid of political energy for centuries. Its artistic productiveness was over. It lived on the glory of its past; it was a university city where the fashionable men of the empire came to finish their education. It still had grammarians, rhetoricians, and philosophers. Probabilists and Cynics, Epicureans and Stoics, lived as not too quarrelsome neighbours in a milieu of decadence and dilettantism where it was the vogue to scoff at all convictions.

The Athenians remained what they always had been —a gay-minded people, inquiring and keenly intelligent, enamoured of gorgeous pageantry and fine language, more indolent than agitated, more boastful than patriotic, more idolatrous than soundly religious. Just as in the time of Demosthenes, "What new?" remained the daily formula of their inconstancy and sophistication. Except for the hours of excessive heat, the citizens who had leisure and loved to gossip (which is to say nearly all of them) lived under the porticos, around the temples, and in the agora. It was there that Paul dared dispute with the philosophers, persons known to every one. He explained to them the essentials of his gospel: Jesus and the Resurrection. His appearance hardly prejudiced them in his favour, yet the power of his word and the strangeness of his doctrine claimed their atten-

tion; they came forward to hear him; and people who happened to be passing inquired, "What would this babbler say?"

In their arrogance as self-complacent intellectualists, they compared him with the birds that hop about on the pavement pecking at the crumbs dropped by pedestrians, or with beggars who keep themselves alive by collecting the grain scattered through the market, or with those street orators who glean their wit in one place and retail it elsewhere. And others explained scornfully, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached Jesus and the resurrection."

Resurrection in Greek was *Anastasis*. Was it by way of sarcasm that they took Anastasis for a goddess? The Athenians had raised altars to Impudence; why could not the Resurrection also be a deity? But though they might have been treating the little Jewish preacher ironically, they at least found him amusing or interesting, as the snobs would say, because he told them things of which they knew nothing.

Certain people who wanted to learn more of his doctrine had the fantastic notion of insisting that he set it forth in a public speech. Without giving him time for reflection, they seized him peremptorily and led him to a place on the hill of Ares, at the eastern side of the Acropolis. It was well chosen for both orator and audience. Paul made no protest; he felt that the Spirit had inspired them with this unforeseen wish, and he was also glad of an opportunity to confront the polytheistic error in the very citadel of its high traditions, to cry out to the idols, "You are 'nothing in the world.' "

From the top of the steps he could see the temples on the hill, with Athens beneath, and an horizon of

mountains and ocean. A crowd might comfortably arrange itself on the mound without missing a single word of a sonorous voice which was doubtless reflected by the wall of a portico.

His discourse was immense in its scope; it was to mark the solemn encounter of Christian dogma and Greek thought. The negative commentators have been at some pains to prove that its very basis is not authentic. Nevertheless, Harnack has defended its historicity. It seems inevitable, when we examine the co-ordination of the text with the general ideas of the apostles and the exigencies of time and place.

The narrator is evidently omitting transitions and recording only the dominant features. Had he been a rhetorician he would have done as Livy did and have composed an exemplary harangue with the traditional facts as a pretext. Some deeply affected listener had remembered the gist of the address and certain specific sentences. Luke wrote down what he had learned from him or from Saint Paul himself.

To begin with, here is a thesis common to all Christians preaching whenever the missionaries were combating idolatry: There is but one God, who made the world and all that exists therein. He is the master of heaven and earth. Thus he does not live in temples made by the hand of man (Stephen had confronted the Sanhedrin with a similar argument) and the hands of men cannot serve him, for he who has given the breath of life to all creatures cannot have need of anything.

In a rational manner intelligible to cultivated Hellenes, Paul announces the same logical censure of Paganism that he was to repeat with greater vehemence at the end of his Epistle to the Romans. We recognize

the old Jewish anathema against the idols, as in Psalm cxii ("They have mouths and speak not: they have eyes and see not") and better still in the Book of Wisdom, which speaks with derision of the artist's inability to represent a god with human likeness, "For being mortal, he worketh a dead thing with wicked hands: for he himself is better than the things which he worshippeth: whereas he lived once, but they never."

But Paul does not stop at condemnation. If God is spirit, what service must we render him? We are all descended from a single man made by God in his image. Thus we are "of the race" of God. We come from him; in him we live, and move, and have our being. He has given us signs of himself in the universe, that we may feel his presence and bless his benefactions. Paul's inevitable conclusion was that we must, as the Master expressed it to the woman of Samaria, "worship the Father in spirit and in truth."

This God was "overlooked" during the "times of ignorance." But he now commands "men that they should all everywhere repent: inasmuch as he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by the man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

Such is Paul's dialectic reduced to its essentials. Nineteen centuries of Christianity have made us familiar with it. But it seemed so bizarre to the Athenians that they could hardly understand it, and much less agree to it.

Yet how cautiously and ingeniously he adapted his message to his audience! In evoking the "unknown god," his eloquence seemed to soar from the very soil of

Athens. He praises their piety, inasmuch as it can be directed towards the true God whom they worship unwittingly. God is not represented as unknowable. On the contrary, the apostle wants to make them understand that they should be able to discover him by the light of reason. As he taught elsewhere, "The invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen." Here a generalization on the philosophy of history envelops a definite reflection suggested by the place itself in which the orator was speaking. "God," he said, "made of one every nation of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation."

With Attica spread out before him, and the Acropolis so visibly formed to bear a temple, Paul thought that Hellas, like Judea, had been predestined for the future of a single people. No horizons but those of Jerusalem could give clearer evidence of a pre-established harmony between a people's environment and their mission. Where could he have better cause to feel that "we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and device of man"? He dares assert this in the presence of the Parthenon, of the chryselephantine Pallas, of the other Pallas to whom they burned a lamp that was filled with oil once a year, of the Athene Areia erected in the Areopagus, while near by were the sanctuary of the Semnae (Erinyes) and statues of Pluto, Hermes, and Ge.

An audience, to hear such impieties without a murmur, would have to be composed primarily of philosophers and sceptics. Paul knew well the public he was dealing with. His language was interlarded with expressions that would appeal to polytheists and to Stoics

estranged from the national cults. Witness the famous citation, "For we are also of his offspring," which recalls the Cilician poet Aratus, but is likewise to be found in Cleanthes' hymn to Zeus. The formula, "In him we live, and move, and have our being," was suited to the ears of Stoic pantheists. But Paul understood the words in a new sense; he used them to suggest truths which he intended to explain more fully afterwards. As a tree-trunk may serve for crossing a ditch, he employed whatever was available to bridge the gap between him and his audience. The philosophers had gone as far as they could in defining the relationship between God and the world. None had established the idea of a personal and transcendent God who is infinitely free, and is in such close union with the human race created by him that we have our corporeal existence as well as a mystical life in the intimacy of the divine being. None had asserted that God became incarnate to give us life by dying and rising again in our behalf.

There were certain terms and conceptions that readily lent themselves to an interpretation in keeping with the spirit of Christ. Paul did not hesitate to turn them to his own purposes.

Did his address become a philosophical discourse? He speaks as an apostle and a prophet should speak, with the certainty and the power of the revelation: "What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this set I forth unto you." If he assumes the Gospel at the start in order that he may better establish the fundamental dogma of the existence and nature of the one God, he finally proclaims the major articles of his faith. The history of the human race appears divided into two periods, "the times of ignorance" and the times of knowledge. The latter

must be the times of repentance. We must prepare for the coming of the Judge, of the *Man* who is entrusted with sovereignty over the living and the dead. Paul speaks of Jesus simply as a man, through fear lest the God-man be mistaken for some mythical divinity. But what audacity to stand before the philosophers, the Parthenon, and the haughty temples while calling the past of Athens an era of "ignorance," and asserting that this unavailing glory would crumble, that people must get down on their knees in the dust and *repent* because they have been ignorant!

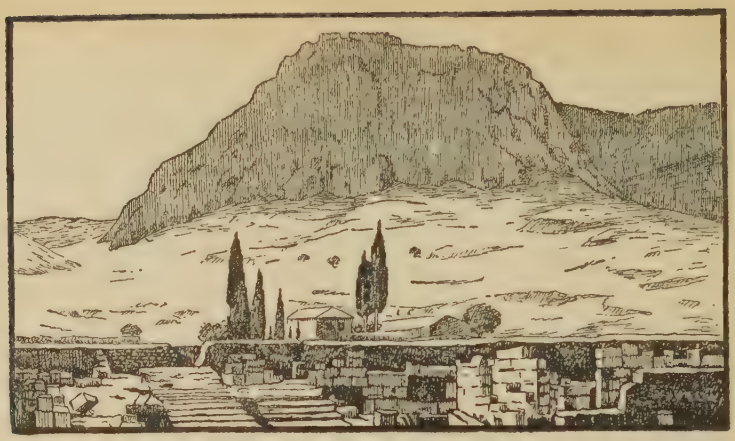
Could such views be received without protest? When the apostle prophesied the "resurrection of the dead," some members of his audience smiled, or shrugged their shoulders, or broke into laughter. Many stood up, declaring, "We will hear thee concerning this yet again." The Greeks knew that certain heroes, such as Hercules and Adonis, had re-risen; and these myths still preserved some symbolic significance among the best of the cultured. Socrates had spoken of the immortal soul. But the resurrection and judgment of all men was something absurd and unintelligible!

Paul realized that if he carried his homily through to its conclusion, his cause would be lost in the eyes of the Athenians; and he brought his address to an abrupt close, as he did not consider his auditors ripe for a catechism that would explain Jesus on the cross.

He made few converts in Athens. They were remembered all the more easily because of their scarcity. One of them, a judge of the Areopagus, an old archon, was called Denys; ecclesiastical tradition honoured him as the first bishop of Athens. A woman also received baptism. She bore the name of Damaris or Damalis.

The Athenians long resisted the Gospel. Their philosophic scepticism, their liking for festivals and processions, the lure of their traditional images, and their national pride all bound them to the ways of the past. Even when they had been converted, they were to be seen, in the second century, after the martyrdom of their bishop Publius, deserting the churches en masse and returning temporarily to pagan practices.

If they had not forced Paul to make what we might call today a formal speech, his passage in their midst would have left but an inconsistent memory. But this discourse was to be a turning-point in the career of the apostle. The Pallas Athene of the Acropolis represented the ancient wisdom, with its dream of brief and earthly perfection. Paul had come forward to show its insufficiency, if not its nothingness. Henceforth the goddess had only to die, the lamp of the sanctuary had but to be extinguished. Reason no longer wished to live except by the guiding light of faith.



XIII

THE CHURCH OF CORINTH

PAUL carried away with him from Athens the disappointment of having worked almost wholly without results. Indefatigable in his hope, he proceeded to Corinth, continuing his course along the west coast. We do not know whether he embarked at the Piraeus or went on foot over the road of Eleusis or Megara and then followed the Saronine Gulf as far as the isthmus. The vague terms of the text seem to indicate a voyage on foot.

Some distance outside the city, the enormous bulk of the Acrocorinthus rose up between the two seas. From where he saw it, it stood out like the cone of a dead volcano. Paul was not unaware that at its summit Cypris, the patron goddess of Corinth, had a chapel served by a thousand priestesses; numberless pilgrims scaled the mountain, as they believed that the servants of pleasure had the power of intercession. But he con-

sidered the demons of the flesh less formidable than the pride of the false sages.

Corinth, like Antioch and Thessalonica, offered him a confused mass which the good leaven might transform. After being destroyed by Mummius and rebuilt by Caesar, this opulent city had become the metropolis of Achaia. Its two ports directed its traffic, the one towards Asia, the other towards Rome. An afflux of freedmen, gladiators, sailors, Jews, manufacturers, and brokers made up an unstable throng that was further swelled by a multitude of slaves—four hundred and fifty thousand, it was said. The red bronze of Corinth was exported to all parts of the empire. The Romans paid extravagant prices for the vases exhumed from the ruins and tombs. Mechanics and founders knew how to imitate these and make false antiques. The people at Corinth were fond of gambling, and abandoned themselves eagerly to pleasure. One courtesan could boast that she had ruined three ship-owners within a few weeks. Beneath the gleaming mist of its gulf, it was a melting-pot for all the elements of a new world.

On his arrival Paul sought the Jewish quarter, where he hoped to find employment. The angel that guided him everywhere, led him to the newly opened shop of a tent-maker, a man of his own trade. Aquila, an Israelite born in the Pontus, had settled at Rome with his wife Prisca or Priscilla. But Claudius, though he was previously favourable to the Jews, had decreed their expulsion, following disturbances of which we know little.[1] Jews were too numerous—amounting to fifty or

[1] Probably caused by conflicts between the synagogues and the Christians. Suetonius, who attributes the trouble to a certain *Chrestos*, must have heard *Christos* mentioned as the cause of these quarrels, and mistakenly assumed that he was an agitator in Rome.

sixty thousand in Rome alone—to be driven out of Italy entirely. The authorities were content to interdict the gathering of mobs and meetings in the synagogues. The troubles with the police greatly interfered with their business. This explains why Aquila had transferred his own trade to Corinth, a city wide open to foreigners. His workshop and store must have been of some importance. His house later served without difficulty as headquarters for the new church.

Were he and Priscilla already baptized? Neither the Acts nor Paul makes any mention of their conversion. Paul said of Stephanas and his people that they were the "firstfruits of Achaia," and that he had baptized them himself. If Aquila and Priscilla had not been Christians when he knew them, he would have begun with them.

For they promptly gave him employment, "and he abode with them." He rapidly assumed a leading position in their household. He won over these people not by persuasion and sententiousness, but by his manifestation of the spirit and the power. He displayed all the gifts of the inspired: faith, knowledge, prophecy, discernment in matters of conscience, the ability to work miracles, and, as a seal of the divine, a measureless charity which was as keen as a sword, and as gentle as a soothing balm.

Paul earned his living as a humble workman, tireless and exemplary in his obedience. Yet he had little of that healthiness which makes good cheer come easy. The "sting" of his flesh gave him little respite. The summers at Corinth are oppressive; the "weakness" which he mentions later was presumably some kind of burdensome fever.

Nevertheless, he announced Christ in the synagogues each Sabbath, and he made converts. Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia; subsidies which they brought with them or which were furnished by the first believers of Corinth enabled them to devote themselves to apostleship. But the eternal hostility of the Jews was not long in making itself felt. Whenever Paul mentioned the name of Jesus to them, they shouted and blasphemed. He "shook out his raiment" upon these obdurate people, and left them with the anathema, "Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles." In effect he was saying, "In repulsing the *life,* you fall into death. I am not to blame, for I have done what I could."

Thereafter he collected all who wanted to hear him at the home of a certain Titus Justus, "one fearing God," "whose house joined hard to the synagogue." He trembled, as he confesses later, to see his work once again disturbed and thrown into confusion. A vision in the night reassured him; the Lord said to him, "Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: for I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to harm thee; for I have much people in this city."

In fact, his words brought greater results at Corinth than anywhere else. Among those who were won over to the faith there was one man of considerable importance. The astonishing thing is that this Crispus was an Israelite, the chief ruler of the synagogue which Paul had left in anger.

The archisynagogos, as guardian of the dogma, saw to the observance of the Law, instructed the people, presided over the assemblies, and collected the alms money. This office was handsomely rewarded, and was accorded

special privileges under Roman law. To obtain it, one had to pass a difficult examination in theology, law, and medicine. The baptism of Crispus and his household had almost the importance that would be attached to an Anglican bishop's conversion to Catholicism. Paul was greatly pleased. He baptized Crispus with his own hand. Whatever his quarrels with the Jews might be, he was as greatly concerned for their salvation as for that of the pagans.

While he was laying the foundation for a powerful church at Corinth, he was thinking of the others that he had left behind him. Timothy had returned from Thessalonica with cheering news. "Timothy . . . related to us . . . that you have a good remembrance of us always, desiring to see us as we also to see you; therefore we were comforted, brethren, in you, in all our necessity and tribulation, by your faith."

But the Thessalonians were aroused over matters of dogma. They were listening to the false doctors who claimed to have received revelations concerning the mystery of the Parousia. When the Lord descended from heaven, would the dead come to life after the assumption of the righteous who were still living, and who would be raised upon clouds to meet the Judge? Are not those who die now disgraced, since they have to undergo the slumber and decomposition of the tomb? Such ideas on the Resurrection and the Last Judgment were veiled in obscurities which each believer tended to explain to his own satisfaction. And imprudent views which the apostle had rigorously avoided were attributed to him. Such distortion of his doctrines was one of his harshest and most persistent trials. In the message that he sent to the

Thessalonians, he reasserts the authentic revelation on the subject of the living and the dead:

"For this we say unto you in the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them who have slept. For the Lord himself shall come down from heaven with commandment, and with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God: and the dead who are in Christ, shall rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, shall be taken up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ, into the air, and so shall we be always with the Lord."

From the words "we who are alive" it could be inferred that Paul expected to hear the trumpet-call that very night, perhaps, and to see himself raised up among the clouds. But he knew that he had no assurance of living until evening; about him other Christians were dying. He by no means forgot the universal signs which would precede the Parousia: before the apostasy of the believers, the Gospel would have to be carried to the extremities of the earth. How long would this time of expectation continue? "A thousand years with the Lord is as one day." He also realized the perils of any illusions concerning this hour, which is known to the Father alone. As at Thessalonica, the lazy would take the nearness of the end as a pretext to quit work or live by begging; and people of good faith would grow weary at hoping for a promised time which might be long in coming. Some were saying to one another: "Where is the promise of his coming? for, from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation." Thus the words "we

who are alive" are used to designate the faithful who would be living at the moment of the Parousia—Paul, and those of his times if they still lived, or others.

He proposed to see that the living should be kept vigilant but should be spared this useless torment. They must watch, since they know neither the day nor the hour. He does not recall the parable of the ten virgins, but he concludes as the Lord had taught him. And he gives vigorous advice at length, imbuing it with the naïve, ineffable tenderness of the first Christian brotherhoods:

"Be at peace among yourselves. And we exhort you, brethren, admonish the disorderly, encourage the faint-hearted, support the weak, be longsuffering toward all. See that none render unto any one evil for evil; but always follow after that which is good, one toward another, and toward all. Rejoice alway. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus to you-ward. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from every form of evil. And the God of peace himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it.

"Brethren, pray for us. Salute all the brethren with a holy kiss."

As the agitators continued to spread their inane prophecies despite his admonitions, in a second sharper and more bitter Epistle he rebukes the Thessalonians for having forgotten what he had told them while he was with them. He refers obscurely to the necessary coming

of the son of perdition, and to the mystery of iniquity that was already in progress. The apostle considers it superfluous or imprudent to recapitulate the prophetic teachings which the Christians had received by word of mouth. He reprimands the indolent who excuse their idleness on the grounds that "the day of the Lord so cometh." Paul himself had worked night and day. He could rightly have asked the faithful to support him, since he fed them on the word of God. "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox," Moses commanded, "when he treadeth out the corn." But he was bent on setting them an example. "If any will not work, neither let him eat," a thoroughly Jewish proverb which displays one of the immemorial virtues of Israel. Even in countries which are most conducive to idleness, the Jew always toiled and still toils prodigiously.

As at Thessalonica, "the saints" at Corinth were more often of humble status than people of wealth or prominence. Paul would seem to commend them on this score, "For see your vocation, brethren, that there are not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble."

Was the spirit of love by which the archisynagogos Crispus, the eminent Stephanas, workmen, modest shopkeepers, petty scribes, poor women, and even slaves were united in Christ, a mere replica of the pagan brotherhoods or *thiases* whose ceremonial repasts produced a temporary fraternizing among men and women of widely divergent social classes? Anything that had a suggestion of paganism about it inspired the Christians with the aversion of an idolatrous contact. It was not here that they found their models, but in the life of the synagogues, which were a kind of religious

and mutual aid association. The Christian community, like the synagogue, had its directors and doctors, its prayer-meetings, and its funds for the poor. It had judges to settle the differences among the members and even to pass on cases of expulsion. But it was animated by a different spirit.

From earliest times, as we have seen in Antioch, the work of the teachers was divided into distinct types. The apostles, the prophets, the didascali or doctors, possessed characteristics which came in time to be more and more specific.

Paul is an apostle in the absolute sense; that is, he was sent by the Lord himself. Timothy, when visiting the Thessalonians at Paul's command, is also an apostle. Each church possessed its apostles, missionaries who went to one place or another at their own discretion or the promptings of the Holy Ghost. They attested their inspiration by the display of supernatural gifts. Sometimes, when inspired, they would speak in a transport of ecstasy. But their especial office was to reveal the mysteries, to exhort, edify, and console.

The prophets on every occasion edified, exhorted, and consoled. But they also had liturgical functions, like the high priest of the Jewish temple. They celebrated the sacrifice and improvised the blessings at the breaking of the bread. They lived in the bosom of the church, and the believers supported them by a kind of tithe levied on the food, clothing, and money at their disposal.

The doctors, whose gift of knowledge fitted them for the task of teaching, came to fill sedentary positions, as the bishop and deacon did later when supplanting apostle and prophet.

Another sedentary body was the council of elders

which, as Ignatius of Antioch expressed it, surrounded the bishop, the representative of God, like the Twelve about Jesus—and its wishes should harmonize with those of the bishop, "as the strings of a lyre are adjusted to one another."

At the time when Paul was organizing the congregation at Corinth, this scheme was not yet so clearly defined. The Church was like a pliant young tree in April, when its buds are about to open. It was already in possession of all its organs. But the divine sap was accelerating the growth in one place and retarding it in another. Paul himself looked upon it in this light, "I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase." What a marvellous period this was—with its burgeoning of promise and fervour!

At that time the believers did not gather in a basilica for their prayers. They met at the home of one of the brethren who had a large house. An upper room served as oratory. We do not know whether images or mystic signs were used at these services. Images were most likely proscribed, owing to the traditional Judaic attitude; for they would suggest the danger of idolatry. "There were many lights in the upper chamber," such as are seen in Greek churches or mosques. On the night of the Sabbath they were lit from evening until the following morning; but when the Sabbath was no longer a holiday, the lamps were lit on Sunday, which was observed as the day of both the Creation and the Resurrection.

On entering, each member of the congregation, "falling down on his face . . . will adore God." They also knelt before the breaking of the bread. But most often they prayed standing, with outstretched palms. The women came in their best clothing. Paul insisted

upon modesty in dress, though such demands were by no means easy to enforce. He specified that the women should wear veils, and he condemned embroideries, and hair jewelled with pearls or bound with gold. And in particular, he forbade women to speak in church on matters of religion.

For a meeting of primitive Christians was not strictly ordered, like a ceremony in a cathedral. While one person was reading a page of the Scriptures, or later "the Memoirs of the Apostles" (the Gospels), another might suddenly arise in a prophetic transport and discourse upon the hidden meaning of a word. Or he might even speak "in a tongue." The glossolalist poured forth an effusion of love that was composed of outcries, chanted invocations, and words without sequence, and which he himself could not always interpret.

Paul, with his genius for the practical and his love of order, had slight admiration for glossolaly. "He that speaketh in a tongue, edifieth himself: but he that prophesieth, edifieth the church. And I would have you all to speak with tongues, but rather to prophesy. For greater is he that prophesieth, than he that speaketh with tongues; unless perhaps that he interpret. . . . What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, I will pray also with the understanding: I will sing with the spirit, I will sing also with the understanding. Else if thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that holdeth the place of the unlearned say, Amen, to thy blessing? because he knoweth not what thou sayest. . . . I thank my God I speak with all your tongues. But in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may instruct others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue."

Paul accused them of acting like "children in sense." Their delight in their faith had the charm of childlike innocence. But when the lyric prattle of the glossolalists was multiplied, it became an incoherent tumult. If some stranger or unbeliever were to enter, he would think that he had fallen among a gathering of madmen. The Oriental liturgies have preserved some of this confused volubility. The priest and the believers speak so swiftly that it is difficult to attach a definite meaning to each sentence. But they also retain a vestige of primitive suppleness, an air of free improvisation. The officiating priest converses with the people or with God in a tone of familiarity which Rome and the West would never permit themselves.

Paul already had the Occidental attitude when he wrote to his beloved Corinthians:

"If any speak with a tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and in course. . . . And let the prophet speak, two or three; and let the rest judge. But if anything be revealed to another sitting, let the first hold his peace. . . . For God is not the God of disunion, but of peace."

The pious enthusiasm was easily regulated by "psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles," and by having one person pray in the name of all. We can get some idea of these liturgical orisons from the great prayer preserved in Clement the Roman's epistle to the Corinthians, and better still from the older ones of the Didache:

"We give thanks to thee, O Holy Father,
For thy holy name,
Which thou hast lodged (as in a tabernacle) in our hearts;

For the knowledge, the faith, and the immortality
Which thou hast revealed to us through Jesus thy Son.
Glory to thee through the ages.

"It is thou, Master omnipotent,
Who hast created the world in honour of thy name,
Who hast given man food and drink
That he may enjoy them and give thanks to thee.
But thou hast given us food and drink of the spirit,
And life eternal through thy servant (thy Son).
Above all, we give thee thanks because thou art mighty.
Glory to thee through the ages.

"May this glorified church be gathered from the four winds
In the kingdom which thou hast made ready.
May the day of grace now come and the world be over.
Hosannah to the God of David.
Whoever is holy, let him come!
Whoever is not holy, let him repent!
Maran Atha. Amen."

This prayer was based on the Benedictions of the Israelite ritual; but a non-Jewish element had crept into the old liturgy and altered it profoundly. This was the dogma of salvation through Christ, of the one and hallowed Church which the Son of God would assemble in his Kingdom, as the wheat sown upon the hillsides is threshed, ground, and kneaded until it acquires the unity of bread; as the blood of the vine which is diffused through the grapes is pressed into wine.

The simple image of the bread and the wine took on a divine consistency when the officiating prophet lifted the bread and the cup in his hands and blessed them while repeating, as the words of the Lord himself

indicate, "This is my body, which is for you; this do in remembrance of me. . . . This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."

He added a long blessing, which was originally improvised, and was called the "eucharist." This word sometimes referred to the consecrated elements, sometimes to the mystical repast, and sometimes to the blessing which accompanied the consecration.

As the rite commemorated Christ's Last Supper with the apostles, before partaking of the consecrated bread and wine the believers had their evening meal together. This liturgical supper was designated mystically by the term agape, or love-feast. The love-feast was the prelude to the Holy Communion. It later became a separate ceremony, and was transferred from evening to morning, before dawn. About the middle of the second century, Justin partially describes this service, which was not yet called the mass:

"When the prayers are over, we give one another the kiss of peace. Then the person in charge of the assembly receives some bread with a cup of water and mulled wine. He takes these, praises God in the name of the Son and the Holy Ghost, and then makes a long prayer of thanks for all the benefits which God has bestowed. Finally all the people cry, Amen. Then the deacons distribute the bread and wine with the holy water, and they carry this to the absent."

In a modern church, where the believers receive the sacrament and pray *too much as individuals,* it would be difficult to find such rejoicing and naïve peacefulness as characterized these services. The primitive Christians were more sensitive to the meaning of the Com-

munion; they found here the charity of Christ multiplied by the love which they bestowed upon him and one another. The fervour of such an apostle as Paul raised to a miraculous height this simple, tranquil happiness which comes of loving oneself in Him who is Love.

But in spite of everything, they could not wholly divest themselves of prejudice and ill will. If baptism exterminated the evil in man, sanctity would be too cheap. Factions, disagreements, pride, bitterness, sensuality, all had their place, even in the bosom of the assembly.

The people of a certain neighbourhood would form separate groups. The well-to-do came bringing hampers stuffed with provisions and full bottles, while the poor lacked the bare necessities. Some gorged themselves and got drunk. On leaving the holy mysteries, the carnal-minded again abandoned themselves to libertinism and the spirit of cupidity. While tolerating scandals among their own numbers, they considered themselves pure and perfect. Arrogance had always been the leading vice of the Corinthians. It is still inscribed, we might say, on the supercilious brow of their Acrocorinthus. When Paul had gone, and the first enthusiasm of the neophytes had abated, their Christianity was endangered by disagreements which nothing short of a miracle prevented from amounting to schism.

He spent eighteen months of toil in developing and strengthening their religion. We may suppose that he preached in other cities of Achaia. Did he go as far as Illyria? It is probable, since he was at the gateway to these mountainous regions, and he speaks of them as

though they were a frontier country into which he had introduced the Gospel.

During his time at Corinth, his great difficulties did not originate with the converts, but with the Jews, who detested him as an apostate. And their hatred is readily understood when we recall that in their eyes the doctrines of the apostle menaced their national life, their traditions, and their hopes. On this occasion they did not attempt to kill the heretic themselves; they planned to combat his message with the authority of Rome.

One day, while he was speaking in the street or in a room opened to pedestrians, a band of men fell upon him and led him by force to the tribunal of the proconsul. The charge which they brought against him to justify their violence was summed up in this audacious formula, "This man persuadeth men to worship God contrary to the law."

In preaching a doctrine that was offensive to Jewish law, Paul might also be said to flout the authority of Rome. Since the Romans recognized the religion of the Israelites, any one who molested it was defying their power and menacing their own gods.

Such was the line of argument that Paul's accusers intended to follow. The proconsul Gallio was a brother of Seneca, and was one of those cultured aristocrats and scrupulous magistrates who wished to perform the duties of their office with the liberalism of a philosopher. Seneca praises his affectionate character, his tenderness for his mother. He had been dextrous in obtaining honours and advancement. Nevertheless, he despised adulation, and his sincerity showed itself in unexpected outbursts. He loved the calm of the sages, and detested

the Jews, with their perpetual clamour and furious controversies over the minutiae of their faith.

He looked on while Paul's enemies rushed about vociferously and Paul himself stood with parted lips, impatient to reply in his defence. This quarrel annoyed him; it was not within his province. He interrupted sharply:

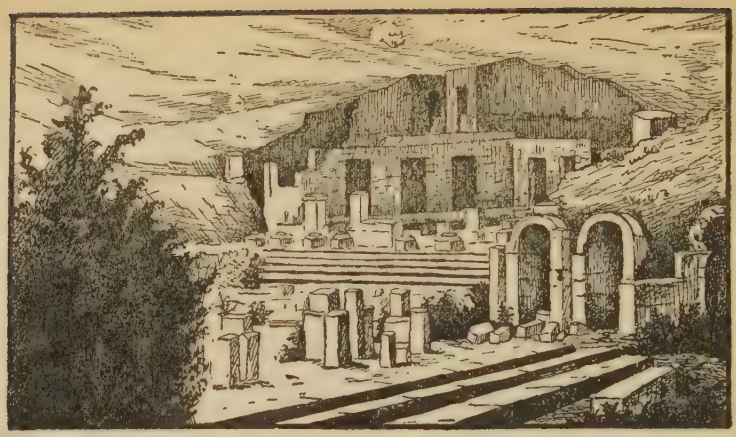
"If indeed it were a matter of wrong or of wicked villainy, O ye Jews, reason would that I should bear with you: but if they are questions about words and names and your own law, look to it yourselves; I am not minded to be a judge of these matters."

At this he made a sign to the lictors. The Jews were put out; Paul escaped their hands. He even found himself avenged in a comical manner. The Greeks, being commercial rivals of the Jews and differing with them acrimoniously on matters of religion, were always ready to make things uncomfortable for them. There were some Greeks present—and when they saw the troop of Paul's accusers being turned away, they seized rods and came to the assistance of the police. Their fury was unloosed, and they even thrashed Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue. Gallio let them do as they liked. He took little interest in the disputes of the rabble.

This episode is the one bright vista in all the tormented history of Paul. Did he subsequently have other relations with Gallio? Did Seneca learn of the apostle through him? Those are unsolvable problems.

It seems that Paul could have settled in Achaia, expanding and strengthening the church of Corinth. But he was a man who had to be constantly on the march. His own preferences might perhaps have taken him on towards the West. But the Spirit led him into Asia

Minor. The churches already founded there required a visit of him. In them and in Ephesus, where he was next to work, he caught a glimpse of that glory which John later symbolized as the seven golden candlesticks surrounding the Son of Man.



XIV

THE TUMULT OF EPHESUS

DEPARTING from Cenchreae—the port of Corinth facing Asia—Paul took with him Aquila and Priscilla, and doubtless the other members of their household. Silas and Luke did not accompany him. Had the tent-maker closed his shop and decided to transfer his business to Ephesus solely that he might follow the preacher of the Gospel? We know nothing of that. But the fact seems likely. The materials and equipment needed for this trade were quite simple; there was a chance of prospering anywhere. This decision of Aquila permits us to see what power of persuasion Paul wielded. But it is useless to seek for the particular motives which led him to take this family as associates in his apostolic career.

Before embarking, he cut off his hair, in evidence of a vow which he had taken for reasons unknown to us.

This was a Jewish form of devotion which affected his companions deeply. After some mortal danger or great sorrow, the Jews would bind themselves by such a penitential promise as a sign of gratitude to the Lord. They would temporarily abstain from wine, and shave off their hair. Paul once more demonstrated that he was not a fanatic. Where national traditions did not run counter to his gospel, he spontaneously returned to the practices of Jewish piety. This vow, like the later vow of Nazariteship, was more than an act of simple compliance.

He sailed as far as Ephesus. Ephesus was connected with the sea, though the alluvial deposits of the Cayster have gradually blocked the port. Here he left his friends Aquila and Priscilla. Although some Jews who were interested in his doctrine attempted to detain him, he continued on his way with the intention of making a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It is uncertain whether he actually completed his itinerary at this time. From Caesarea, by way of Antioch and Tarsus, he reached the Taurus, and returned to see the churches of Phrygia and Galatia.

He knew that Judaizing missionaries, who are thought to have come from Antioch, were undoing his work among the Galatians. Paul, according to them, was not a true apostle. Had the living Messiah revealed the truth to him as to the Twelve? By what right did he abrogate a law that had been handed down to them as an inviolable patrimony? Could the Gentiles be saved except by incorporating their salvation to that of Israel? Now the sign of salvation, the token of spiritual pre-eminence, was circumcision. When Paul was among them, he had forbidden it; but he had approved of it else-

where, since he had advised the circumcision of Timothy. Thus, "to please people" he altered his gospel!

Paul realized the urgent need of restoring the Galatians to the true idea of justice and the understanding of the cross. Before his return, in a moment of indignation and anxiety, he sent them his Epistle, which seems to have been written at Ephesus in 53 or 54.

At first he addresses them like a father warning big disobedient children, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach a gospel to you besides which we have preached to you, let him be anathema." He did not receive his gospel from men, but from Jesus Christ. For they know that up to the hour when God revealed his Son to him, he was most jealously attached to the Pharisaic traditions.

The apostles have recognized his vocation. But is it authentic purely because they have recognized it? It came to him by a revelation that cannot be questioned, while James, Cephas, and John, the "pillars," have vouchsafed him and Barnabas the apostleship of the Gentiles.

Is his purpose to please people? No, for in the presence of every one he told Peter what he thought of his conduct. He sees only the Christ crucified, and he is crucified with him. If the Law were enough to justify, then Christ would have died in vain.

Thus, of what use was the Law? You have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, and you would slip back into the life of the flesh? It is by faith, not by circumcision, that you become the children of Abraham. Abraham was justified before being circumcised; it was not circumcision that made him righteous.

Justification comes not from the Law, but from the

promise. The Law is a contract; and a contract is abolished if one of the two parties violates it or annuls it. The promise, on the contrary, comes from God alone; thus it is irrevocable.

The Law was like a teacher of children under age. When the fulness of the times had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the Law. He sent him among the slaves who become through Christ his adopted sons and heirs.

Here Paul grew tender at the memory of all the affectionate ties that bound him to the good Galatians:

"You received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus. . . . Am I then become your enemy, because I tell you the truth? . . . My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you . . . I am perplexed about you."

And he applies the allegory of Sarah and Hagar, to explain still more clearly the two conditions of mankind before and after the coming of the Redeemer. Hagar, the symbol of the Law, was the mother of enslaved sons: Sarah, as the Church, gave birth to children who were free. One must drive away the son of the slave, and live according to the promise, as children of liberty and light.

"Stand fast, and be not held again under the yoke of bondage. Behold, I Paul tell you, that if you be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Whoever admits this part of the Law engages himself to observe the Law in its entirety, since circumcision is the epitome of the Law.

It has been objected that Paul himself preaches circumcision. If he preached it, why did the Jews persecute him? "I would that they which unsettle you would

even cut themselves off" (like the priests of Cybele). "Walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. . . . But the fruit of the Spirit is, charity, joy, peace, benignity. . . . Bear ye one another's burdens. . . . Neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision. . . . From henceforth let no man be troublesome to me; for I bear the marks of the Lord Jesus in my body."

Did his vehement admonitions correct the false asceticism of the Galatians? We may doubt it. His passage through Galatia was not enough to suppress the campaign of the Judaizers. But he gave support to principles which the Church would have to accept, as they were vital to the welfare of the faith. His letter shone like a prodigious document of inspiration, logic, commanding vigour, and charity.

He soon returned from Galatia to Ephesus, the present centre of his apostleship. Ephesus, which was closer to Europe than Tarsus and Antioch, seemed to him like the focal point of the roads by which the churches of the West would connect with those of Asia. All the peoples of the Mediterranean commingled in this metropolis. The magnificently reconstructed temple of Artemis attracted caravans of pilgrims. The Artemis who was worshipped here originally had nothing in common with the Artemis of Greece. Her earliest image had been an aerolite, a black stone fallen from heaven. She was an astral divinity, without form; then she became an Artemis "with multiple breasts," the mother of humans and beasts, figure of the all-fecund earth.

The site of this temple can now be recognized solely from the outline of the peribolos. But the theatre, streets, and library give evidence of an opulent city that

was fond of intellectual amusements. The theatre, which could accommodate twenty-five thousand spectators, served for all popular gatherings. Its broken tiers of benches lie against a hill. On one side a mountain, now wild and wooded, forms a natural amphitheatre which amplified the resonance of the voices.

The stage remains almost intact, with the bases of its columns, its steps, and its foundations. At the top of the benches, the arch of a door still rests on its supports. From here, an opening between the double line of the majestic heights permits the eye to range far off to the sea.

Streets, lined with stelae and tombs, still retain the original paving blocks, which seem quite new, their whiteness is so dazzling. Further down, the library emerges; it is constructed like a portico, with a semicircular apse at the centre. The shelves that housed its volumes are still visible in its walls. Behind are curving galleries, which are supported by columns and run off towards obscure passageways. Did they store in this labyrinth such books of occult science as the Christians later abandoned to the public bonfire?

Ephesus, when Paul landed there, had already heard the word of God. A disciple, "an Alexandrian by race," a converted Jew named Apollos or Apollonios and well versed in the Scriptures, had preached in the synagogue. He was an ardent believer, and "he spake and taught carefully the things concerning Jesus." But by a strange lacuna in his knowledge of the baptismal rites, he knew "only the baptism of John." He was unaware of the baptism that is given in the name of the Trinity and brings the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Priscilla and Aquila heard him, and they told him of

his error with the simplicity of a time when any one who possessed the knowledge of the faith felt free to impart it even to persons of superior learning. Since Paul was no longer at Corinth, they "encouraged" him to serve there as apostle in his stead. They gave him letters commending him to the believers of that city. Apollos immediately departed, strongly urged by the apostle himself; and by Paul's testimony we know that he acquired considerable influence over the church of Corinth.

If Paul did not find him on his return to Ephesus, he met a group of believers who had apparently received a very incomplete doctrine from Apollos. Like Apollos, they did not know of baptism in the name of the Holy Ghost; they were not even aware that the Holy Ghost existed. Paul asked them, "Into what then were ye baptized?" They answered, "Into John's baptism." Paul explained, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Jesus." Then they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Paul laid his hands on them, and the Holy Ghost came over them; they spoke in tongues and prophesied.

This surprising episode reveals the fact that at the threshold of the primitive Church there were little chapels professing a simplified form of Christianity which was, so to speak, knotted in its growth. These twelve half-Christians lived outside the common preaching; they had never heard of the Paraclete's descent among the apostles. They were more likely pagans than Jews by birth, since Jews would not have been so ignorant of the Spirit, the life-giving Principle which moved above the waters and lighted the visions of the prophets.

Instead of correcting their mistake by a metaphysical proof, Paul simply pointed out the connection between Saint John the Baptist and Jesus, just as the Gospels later expounded it. The Christ whose herald he became is indeed the Christ of history, and not some fictitious being compounded of Graeco-Oriental cults.

We should like to be able to follow his catechism as he discussed it day by day. What a priceless thing the journal of his sermons would have been for us!

In accordance with his method, these sermons at Ephesus were first delivered in the synagogue. But by the end of three months the Jews were decrying and blaspheming his doctrines as they had done elsewhere. Then he left the place of prayer, taking his disciples with him. A certain Tyrannus, a professor of grammar and philosophy, turned over to him or rented him the hall of his "gymnasium." The classes in his school were held in the morning, until about eleven o'clock. Then Paul occupied the building—and when the heat was not too intense he discoursed and catechized until late afternoon.

He spent the rest of the day with Aquila, as he still wove tents for a living. And in the evening he went "from house to house," exhorting the faithful, instructing the pagans, "and with tears" begging the Jews to repent. Never, it seemed, had his fervour reached such convincing intensity. He was the perfect servant of the Lord, giving himself so fully that he received unlimited strength from this attachment.

He did not exercise his powers solely in benefactions and in propagating the faith. Even unwittingly, he performed cures: if the cloth which had wiped the sweat of his brow, or the aprons he used while at work, were

applied to the bodies of the sick or the possessed, they were marvellously comforted.

Magi and sorcerers, who were jealous of his supernatural powers, tried to imitate him. Jewish exorcists ran about the country boasting that they could bring relief by means of secret words which had been handed down in their families since the time of Solomon. Some of them, the "seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, a chief priest," ventured to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus in the attempt to cure unfortunates tormented by evil spirits.

"I adjure you," they commanded, "by Jesus whom Paul preacheth."

The evil spirit responded:

"Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?"

And one daemoniac, leaping upon the exorcists, bit them and tore their garments. He had more strength than all of them, and drove them from the house, wounded, half-naked, and ashamed.

All Ephesus talked of their misadventure. Perhaps no city was more madly devoted to the mysteries of magic, which the leisured class cultivated as a pastime. They collected books of incantations; their imagination was keyed up by such experiences as were later described by Apuleius. In a country rampant with vague Phrygian mysticism, the magic formulae enjoyed a prestige which it was hard to combat. By such methods, it was thought, one could communicate with the spirits which were masters of the air and the subterranean world. The invisible world became tangible; man would compel the superior beings to yield him some portion of their power, to deliver him from sickness, to gratify his loves or hatreds.

Many Christians who had been given to such practices prior to baptism, returned to them despite themselves. Paul showed them what daemonic servitude was implied in the illusion of a superhuman power. But the books of magic remained a temptation to them and a menace to others. Driven by a strong religious impulse, they made a great pile of them and burned it in the presence of the entire assembly. The chronicler of the Acts places the value of the works destroyed in this way at fifty thousand drachmas. When sold they brought very high prices, because of the miraculous properties which their litanies were supposed to possess.

Had Paul prescribed this extermination? At least he approved of it, though the pagans might accuse him of savage intolerance. Any protection of noxious error would have seemed to him like a crime against truth. What the Psalms energetically call the "throne of iniquity" now had to vanish, since all wisdom had its fulness in Jesus crucified.

Thus Paul at Ephesus saw "a great door and evident" opening before him. But at the same time, and not without sorrow, he recognized "many adversaries." The antagonism, trickery, rabidity, and fury of his enemies called forth the ominous words, "If I fought with wild beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me, if the dead rise not again?" We may conclude that he was opposed by the implacable Jews, the devout pagans, and the false brethren, who planned to divide and deceive the faithful, while waiting for the populace to be stirred to rebellion by the traffickers of the temple of Artemis.

At present, besides his immediate struggles, he suffered the torment of knowing that in the other churches, in Galatia or at Corinth, his work was being

calumniated, shattered, and threatened with disaster.

From the household of the Christian woman Chloe at Corinth he received such alarming news that he wanted to return immediately to Achaia. His presence would end the scandalous situation there and would restore these turbulent people to unity in the spirit of Christ. Nevertheless, he decided to "tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost." He sent Timothy and Erastus, entrusting them with an admirably vigorous message, his first Epistle to the Corinthians, in which he condemns their sectarian divisions, libertinage, and spiritual disorder, while formulating a set of doctrines vital to the Church at all times.

The Corinthians have been laden with invaluable gifts, since the truth of the Lord crucified is firmly established among them. They should peacefully await his Coming—and not seek for worldly wisdom like the pagans. Wisdom in the worldly sense is folly before Christ; no compromise between the world and God is possible; and the "foolishness of God" confounds the wisdom of man.

It is the spiritual man, and not the carnal, that understands the word and life of the Spirit. Like all the apostles, Paul is but a witness, a dispenser. Thus the believers should never say, "I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas." Was Paul crucified for the salvation of man?

In their religious life the Christians should have no dealings with the unchaste and the idolatrous. They should not tolerate the incestuous union between one of their number and the wife of his dead father. They themselves should avoid impurity. The unchaste man

sins against his own body, and the body is the temple of the Holy Ghost within us.

Those who are married should live in marriage with holiness and loyalty. Every one should remain as he was when the divine call first found him. Marriage is good; but the state of continence is more perfect. "But he that is with a wife, is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife: and *he is divided.*" The idols are nothing. Thus it does not at all matter if any one eats meat that has been sacrificed to an idol. Nevertheless, so as not to scandalize the weak, one should not sit at meat in an idol's temple.

The assemblies should foster order and love. No one should become boastful of his spiritual endowments. The same Spirit dispenses his gifts to all as he sees fit. And in particular, they should strive after charity, which is greater than faith and hope, because it will continue to eternity.

The apostle leads the Corinthians to the basic truth, the fact of the Resurrection. Christ is risen; through him the dead will rise again; the corruptible flesh will be reclothed in immortality.

"Wherefore," he concluded, "my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not vain in the Lord."

But he does not stop at exalted, abstract advice. At the close of his Epistle he outlines a project which was near to his heart. He had plans for a great collection. He was thinking of the brethren at Jerusalem, who were always in need, and to whom he proposed to bring an important offering. Besides his feeling of compassion for

them, he wanted to show the saints of the mother-church that he and all other Christians, even non-Jews, still looked upon it as the centre of their sanctified life. The Redeemer of the universe had gone forth from Zion; the Lord had promised Israel that "the covenant of my peace shall not be moved." It was at Jerusalem that Christ would reappear in triumph.

Paul wanted to make sure that this collection, which had such deep symbolic meaning, should net as much as possible; and he organized it with the industriousness of a practical Jew. "Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come."

He sent his Epistle in the spring. He thought of going into Macedonia, and of reaching Corinth in the autumn. "But with you it may be that I shall abide, or even winter, that ye may *set me forward on my journey* whithersoever I go." Circumstances must have altered his plans. Did he, as he had spoken of doing, remain at Ephesus until Pentecost, the feast of the first-fruits? We may doubt it.

Every year, in April, the Ephesians honoured their goddess, Artemis, by orgiastic ceremonies, games in the stadium, and gatherings in the theatre. The eunuchs of the temple, the Megabyzi, and the virgins who served the goddess drew her through the streets and past the docks of the harbour. Sacred heralds, trumpeters, flute-players, and horsemen went before the procession. Censers were swung before the statue, which had a high modius as head-dress, and which displayed a cluster of breasts as a symbol of fecundity. Its body was enclosed in a sheath with carvings of animals in relief. These winged lions, winged bulls, rams, griffins, and

bees represented the unceasing creativeness of the mother of the gods. Artemis reigned over Ephesus; she was the glory of her city! she inspired her devotees with the rapturous feeling of a holy communion with her eternal power.

During the month of Artemision, pilgrims arrived in enthusiastic throngs from the whole province of Asia, the islands, and even Egypt. Near the temple, the believers bought little images of the shrine in wood, ivory, or silver. A guild exploited this trade, which was a very profitable one.

This year, the silversmiths noted that the sale of the images had fallen off. They sought the cause, and laid the blame to the sermons of the Jewish missionary who was announcing a new god. One of the most influential of their number, a certain Demetrius, called a meeting of the silversmiths and their workmen.

"Sirs," he said to them, "ye know that by this business we have our wealth. And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods which are made with hands. And not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth."

Demetrius was assuredly exaggerating like a demagogue in order to arouse the popular resentment. Either by design or through ignorance, he confused the Jewish propaganda, which was bitterly hostile to the idolatrous images and could make itself felt throughout Asia, with the apostleship of the Christian Paul, for whom devo-

tion to the images was a secondary matter. Had the growth of the churches been able to ruin so soon a trade that had prospered for centuries? At any rate, Demetrius aimed to give this impression; he hoped to enlist on the side of the silversmiths the priests themselves, the enormous personnel of the temple, and the beggars. He wanted to cause an uprising which would result in the expulsion or massacre of Paul and the Christians; and he nearly succeeded beyond his own hopes.

The workmen poured into the street, shouting excitedly, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The clamour increased. Pilgrims, and others who happened to be passing, joined the demonstrators and shouted without knowing why, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" The throng was whipped into a frantic rage; they surged towards the theatre, the usual place of public gatherings. They passed two Macedonian Greeks, Aristarchus and Gaius, who were pointed out as companions of Paul. The two men were attacked and seized. The more violent were minded to stone them or tear them to pieces.

When Paul heard of the tumult, and realized that two of his own people were in peril of death, his one idea was to rush to the theatre and address the rioters. The danger thrilled him; he saw a magnificent opportunity to proclaim Christ before a whole people by offering himself for martyrdom. But his disciples would not allow him to appear. And certain important men of the city, Roman functionaries with whom he had made friends, the "chief officers of Asia," also ordered him to lie quiet. He yielded, because the hour had not yet come when he should give all his blood.

The shouts in the theatre continued. The voices, re-

echoing from the mountain, conflicted with one another like waves among the piles of a jetty. The howling redoubled when a certain Alexander made a sign to indicate that he wanted to speak. He was a Jew; and as the Jews who happened to be caught in this mob felt themselves in danger, they delegated him to disengage their cause from that of the Christians. He waved his hands, demanded a little silence. When the populace recognized a Jew, they shouted as though they would crush him beneath their invectives.

The uproar was repeated, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" For two hours the mob, in a state of frenzy, bombarded their goddess with the imperious call of their wounded faith. The clamour subsided, and was fitfully resumed. Of a sudden, a public figure appeared with outstretched arms by the pillars of a portico. The crowd greeted him with applause. It was the "townclerk," the chancellor who ordinarily presided over the assemblies of the people. In an instant calm was established; the townclerk said simply:

"Ye men of Ephesus, what man is there who knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is temple-keeper of the great Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter? Seeing then that these things cannot be gainsaid, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rash. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of our goddess. If therefore Demetrius, and the craftsmen that are with him, have a matter against any man, the courts are open, and there are proconsuls, let them accuse one another. But if ye seek anything about other matters, it shall be settled in the regular assembly. For indeed we are in danger to be accused concerning this day's riot,

there being no cause for it: and as touching it we shall not be able to give account of this concourse."

When he had finished, he dismissed the multitude. The Ephesians were a frivolous people, and they quieted down as quickly as they had become aroused.

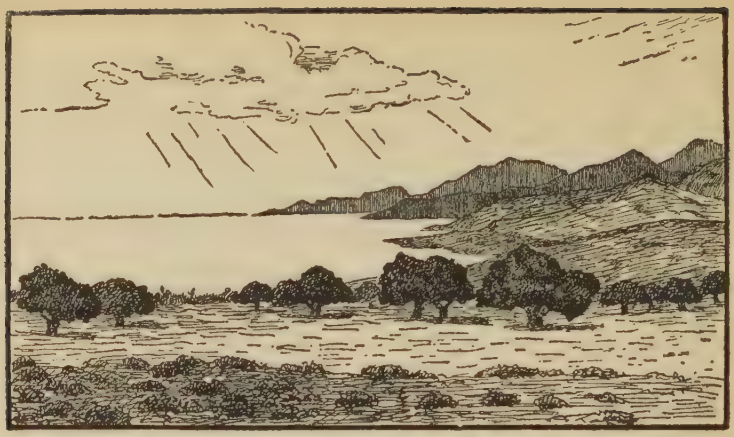
Nevertheless, after this event Paul could not remain at Ephesus. His enemies were in coalition against him and were plotting some sinister attack upon his life. Aquila and Prisca had risked their own lives to save him. As he did not want to expose them further, he embarked secretly for Troas, with the intention of passing into Macedonia.

But for some time he was greatly dejected by this added hardship, after so many others. There are nights when even the most valiant lie down in exhaustion. "We were pressed out of measure above our strength," he was to confess, "so that we were weary even of life." Even physically he felt himself depleted: "our outward man is decaying." There were even times when he cried aloud the Psalm of abandonment: "O God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? . . . For many dogs have encompassed me: the council of the malignant hath besieged me." He looked forward to an early death. And as he added loftily, he placed no further hope in mankind, "that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead." If the outward man faltered at moments, within he experienced each day a self-renewal. "For when I am weak, then am I powerful."

He realized more clearly than ever that his days on earth would be one endless struggle against "wild beasts." And the marvel of it was that he became no less tender, confiding, and full of love for his brethren.

As I stood in the stone basin of the Coliseum at Rome

and imagined the martyrs in the centre of the arena, erect in the face of incommensurable derision and barking dogs and bears or hyenas licking their chops, I understood more forcefully than ever before the magnificent rigour of this Christian's destiny. Confronting him, and within him, was *the world* with its implacable hostility; all around him were enormous walls, impossible to scale; and the one single way of escape was the heavens.



XV

RETURN TO HELLAS

THE EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS

THE apostle had apparently been thinking of Rome since his trip to Cyprus, perhaps ever since the hour when he had first been called. Did not all the Gentile people concentre in the capital city of the empire? He often spoke of this to Aquila and Prisca. While he was staying at Ephesus, they had heard words of his which he must have uttered more than once, "I must also see Rome."

At the opening of his Epistle to the Romans, he declares solemnly, "For God is my witness . . . that without ceasing I make a commemoration of you, always in my prayers making request, if by any means now at length I may have a prosperous journey, by the will of God."

And the final salutations of the Epistle show that he

knew many of the believers at Rome. He first names his friends Aquila and Prisca. In fact, they had left Ephesus shortly after him, as it was no longer possible for them to carry on their business there, and they ran the risk of assassination. They had returned to Rome, where the edict of expulsion had ceased to be enforced. As they had done at Ephesus, they held the meetings of the church in their own home, and prepared for the coming of Paul.

Before rejoining them there, he was anxious to see the saints of Jerusalem again, and to bring them as testimony of his progress the generous alms gathered from all the churches of Asia, Macedonia, and Achaia.

His original plan was first to visit Macedonia. But at Troas he learned that dissensions and scandals persisted among the Corinthians; they were criticizing and contesting his apostleship. They reproached him for his extraordinary readiness to move from one place to another, which they took as proof of an unstable character. He thought that for the moment, in the state of depression and agitation which he was having such difficulty in throwing off, his appearance in person would be ineffective; he preferred to write. He dictated a letter filled with anguish and reproach, and entrusted it to the hands of Titus. If Timothy had been too timid to suppress the sectarian conflicts, perhaps Titus would have better success.

This Epistle of Paul's has disappeared, we do not know exactly why. But he tells us that it made a strong impression:

"For also when we were come into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we suffered all tribulation; combats without, fears within. But God, who comforteth

the humble, comported us by the coming of Titus. And not by his coming only, but also by the consolation, wherewith he was comforted in you, relating to us your desire, your mourning, your zeal for me, so that I rejoiced the more. For although I made you sorrowful by my epistle, I do not repent; and if I did repent, seeing that the same epistle (although but for a time) did make you sorrowful; now I am glad; not because you were made sorrowful; but because you were sorrowful unto penance."

Paul's letter had first overwhelmed them and then made them more willing to accept sound advice. Titus, by his vigorous insistence, had aided it in its effect. They had received him "with fear and trembling," but had submitted in a wave of humility. Titus also induced them to "set themselves to minister unto the saints," by contributing to the collection for Jerusalem.

When he returned, Paul was reassured by the repentance of the Corinthians and sent them another Epistle. This is now known as the second, though in reality it is the fourth, as two others have been lost.

After a penetrative outburst in which he tells them what he had suffered on their account, he exhorts them to prove themselves as generous as the believers of Macedonia have been. The passage of his letter in which he touches on this delicate point is at once decisive and insinuating; the grandeur of his views commands alms, and the unction of his love solicits them.

"I speak not as commanding; but by the carefulness of others, approving also the good disposition of your charity. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that being rich he became poor, for your sakes; that through his poverty you might be rich. And herein

I give my advice. . . . For if the will be forward, it is accepted according to that which a man hath, not according to that which he hath not. For I mean not that others should be eased, and you burthened, but by an equality. In this present time let your abundance supply their want, that their abundance also may supply your want."

He stimulates their liberality by appealing to their pride, "Lest, when the Macedonians shall come with me, and find you unprepared, we (not to say ye) should be ashamed in this matter." But he raises himself infinitely above the petty tricks of a wheedler. He appeals to something beyond self-interest. He sees in alms an ineffable communication of the divine love. In holding out his hand for Jerusalem, he makes them feel that he is giving rather than receiving.

His explanations allow us a glimpse of the difficulties connected with such a collection. It appeared quite simple to the converted Jews; to them it merely continued, with a different meaning, the secular custom of the Israelites abroad who sent annual offerings to the Temple. The baptized pagans, on the other hand, showed surprise. Some of them must have spoken of Paul with the eternal murmur of doubt, "Will all this money go to the poor of Jerusalem?" As he has heard of this attitude, he makes it clear that he is very anxious to avoid the slightest suspicion; among the collectors he includes a brother "whom we have many times proved earnest in many things."

Does he take such precautions through any vain fear of being misunderstood by others? His enemies could distort and belittle his every act. The thing was not important in itself, but such slanders against his con-

duct would interfere with the effectiveness of his apostleship. Thus this Epistle as a whole is a kind of apology, and is singularly precious. Blessed be the detractors of Paul, who elicited for us this poignant and proud reply, the confession of the sufferings and visions of a saint!

His enemies, to whom he refers ironically as "the very chiefest apostles," or without irony as the false apostles, were covetous missionaries. In hypocritical diatribes they accused him of inconsistency and weakness. "His letters," they insinuated, "are weighty and strong: but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech of no account."

Perhaps he really was prone to unevenness of temper and attitude. Like the sick man that he was, he underwent crises of exasperation. His eloquence, which he calls mediocre, displayed both heights and depths. He obeyed paradoxical impulses, which the malicious characterized as contradictory. All his thoughts were subject "to the obedience of Christ."

But he warns the Corinthians that they will find him the same when near as at a distance. If by himself he is weak, the omnipotent Christ lends him strength.

He reverses the complaints, in his turn accusing those who ought to be silent and humble. Are they resentful because he preached gratuitously, without being an expense to any one? He intimates that the false apostles, on their part, ask the believers for more than they need.

He was accused of glorifying himself and making too much of the power which he had received from Christ. He is proud to deserve this censure, for it is not his own person that he glorifies. He could have vaunted his advantages according to the flesh. He is a Jew, of pure

race and good lineage. He has worked harder than any other for Christ, enduring more fatigue and opprobrium. Revelations and visions have been lavished upon him. But he wishes to glorify himself solely in his infirmity; and if he justifies himself, it is not before men. "In the sight of God speak we in Christ. For all things, beloved, are for your edifying."

He announces his visit to the Corinthians. For the *third* time he will come to see them. Thus he had made a second trip of which we know nothing except this passing allusion. And the Acts tell us but one thing about his third visit: he remained at Corinth three months, the three months of the bad season when sailing was impossible. It is presumably here, before going to Jerusalem, with his eyes turned towards Rome and the West, that he planned the beginnings of a new phase in his career, as he dictated his great Epistle to the Romans. Perhaps he entrusted it to Phoebe, a Christian "deaconess" of the church of Cenchreae who was just leaving for Italy, and of whom he says at the end, "Assist her in whatsoever business she shall have need of you. For she also hath assisted many, and myself also."

The solemnity and magnitude of the Epistle seem proportionate to his idea of the Christian community at Rome and of its future. On the surface it seems odd that he should have thought the letter advisable. For by principle he never worked on foundations laid by others; and he had no part in the beginnings of the church at Rome.

The Gospel had been brought there very early. Anything happening in the Orient soon made itself felt in the capital. Soldiers of the Italic cohort at Caesarea had become converted, like the centurion Cornelius,

and on returning to Rome, had told of Christ. Some foreigners, Greeks from Antioch who were in Jerusalem at the time of the first Pentecost, had emigrated to the leading city of the empire or stopped there for a time. The majority of the people mentioned in the final salutations of the Epistle bear Greek names.

Jews had formed the first nucleus of the "chosen saints." The Jewish colony was important enough to enforce the repose of the Sabbath in quarters where they did business, in the Trastevere, at Subura, near the Porta Capena.

They were mostly innkeepers and small dealers in dates, oil, and fish. When Juvenal was walking through the streets of the suburbs, he came, not without curiosity, upon a Jewish sorceress in rags, who begged at his ear as he passed, and in payment for her favourable predictions snatched up a few small coins with unclean fingers. But he could also have seen Jews who were well-to-do traders, like Prisca and Aquila—and Jewish doctors, painters, poets, comedians, and converted Jewesses, rich courtesans like Poppaea.

The Jews at Rome were as eager to gain proselytes as they were everywhere else. Unwittingly they worked for Christianity. When the new faith was announced in a synagogue, it was those fearing God, rather than the Jews, who opened their hearts. When Paul arrived at Rome, he called a meeting of "those that were the chief of the Jews," the leading figures of the synagogue. They acted as though they had not known of his doctrine even by hearsay. Nevertheless, his Epistle attests that the number of converted Jews among the Christians was large.

Bitter conflicts had certainly arisen between the syna-

gogue and the Church; the Jews must have resorted to violence; the police had taken a hand; and to be rid of the Jews Claudius had signed his edict banishing both factions. But soon Jews and Christians had returned; and the Roman church was prospering, since Paul, at the opening of his Epistle, can pay it this praise, "Your obedience is published in every place."

What apostle had first evangelized the Romans? Tradition asserts that Peter made a first journey to Rome after the year 44. There is no document to deny this, yet we are sure that Peter had left Rome at the time when Paul wrote to the Romans. Otherwise Paul would have alluded to his presence; he would even have refrained entirely from superposing his teachings upon those of one of the "pillars."

If he was prompted by both inspiration and personal desire to send such a message, we can discover its immediate motive in the admonition which concluded it:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, to mark them who make dissensions and offences contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such, serve not Christ our Lord, but their own belly; and by pleasing speeches and good words, seduce the hearts of the innocent. For your obedience is published in every place. I rejoice therefore in you. But I would have you to be wise in good, and simple in evil."

Paul, who had seen other churches devastated by schism and scandal, would spare the Roman church from such risks in the future. The two scourges to be feared were a reversion to idolatry or, as with the Galatians, the propaganda of the Judaizers. Thus he established these two truths with irrefutable force: Man is not saved by his natural righteousness, since the pagans,

even though they were able to know God, have nevertheless fallen into all the errors of the spirit and the most ignominious aberrations of the senses. Nor is he saved by the observance of the Law; the Jews possess the Law, but they transgress against it. Thus, *he alone will live who is righteous by virtue of the faith;* because he receives the sanctifying life through grace. *Whether he be born Jew or Gentile,* it is God that justifies him.

"For whom he foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of his son; that he might be the firstborn amongst many brethren. And whom he predestinated, them he also called. And whom he called, them he also justified. And whom he justified, them he also glorified."

Paul surrounds these *cardinal* ideas, which are the mainstay of his entire doctrine, with a theological, moral, and prophetic fresco of unequalled majesty and depth. Here we are considering it purely in connection with his acts and feelings, and with the environments that he transformed.

One page was enough for him to describe the pagan forfeiture. With his sinister logic he retraces the obscuring of the divine truth among the idolatrous, and their vicious degradation. Assuredly, Roman society might have offered him very chaste women and men of high virtue, people who were as pure-souled as they knew how to be. But Tacitus, Suetonius, Juvenal, Apuleius, and certain paintings of Pompeii provide a commentary upon the apostle in documents which it is difficult to contest. What Suetonius tells of Tiberius, Nero, and their surroundings is not an invention. The heroes of Petronius, when they abandon themselves to unnatural practices, are represented as laudable. The amoralist de-

lights in these turpitudes. And where in the pagan world do we find them condemned?

Paul condemns them and explains them—this is the powerful newness of his judgment—in confronting them with the justice of God. When man worships and serves the creation in preference to the Creator, when he considers himself as an end, he sullies the very human principle that he deifies; and this carnal aberration gives rise to pride, cruelty, and all the homicidal passions.

But the Jew is not above the Gentile; he is still less forgivable if, while knowing God, he outrages by his evil actions the commandments in which he believes. Thus, he should not be so vain of his privileges; he should not boast to baptized pagans of the advantages of the Law if he lacks the faith which gives life to his works.

Nevertheless, Paul is far from wishing to harass the Jews. He asks the Gentiles to remain humble before them. The oracles of God were intrusted to this chosen people; it has received promises which are confirmed in the person of Christ. They will end when Israel believes in its Redeemer.

Must it be admitted that Paul means to ask the Christians of Rome, who are mostly pagans by birth, not to despise the Jews, but to honour them? Such a thought appears in his apostrophe to the Gentile:

"If thou, being a wild olive, art ingrafted in them . . . boast not against the branches. . . . Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then: The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in. Well: because of unbelief they were broken off. But thou standest by faith: be not highminded, but fear."

Nevertheless, this apology for Israel seems to arise

out of something more personal. It seems to answer the torment and pious anguish which have afflicted Paul since his conversion. Would his brethren in the flesh be disgraced until the end? Was it possible that the promise of God should remain unfulfilled? Could God be unjust?

All these meditations on a problem of unfathomable immensity, in both the divine plan and human destinies, were epitomized by Paul in this pathetic debate. He has scrutinized the Scriptures, and has weighed the words in which the promise was expressed, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." The error of the Jews, and of himself so long as he was one of them, lay in the claim that all their descendants according to the flesh would share in the promise. Isaac is the child of the miracle. God remains free in his choice; he saves those whom he wishes to save. Who, then, would ask him his reasons?

To justify the Lord, Paul deems it enough to recall his words to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy." Let no one pride himself on his works. "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that hath mercy."

God has picked his vessels of mercy among both Jews and pagans. The others have nothing to say, because God owes them nothing. Paul is considering not so much the eternal salvation of all souls as the collective mission of a people. Israel thought that it could obtain salvation by the righteousness of its works. It has heard the word of Christ, but has not understood it, and has not wished to understand it. Thus God has made it obdurate.

And nevertheless, God has not wholly rejected it. Paul himself is an Israelite "of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin." The "hardening" of the Jews

has led to the salvation of the Gentiles. If Israel had suddenly been converted, the apostles would not have laboured to save the infidels. No; if its "fall is the riches of the world," what would be its rise but the "resurrection of the dead"?

This last statement, though obscure, is full of substance. It recalls Ezekiel's vision of the bones. Israel would lie for long on the face of the earth like a corpse whose bones are parched and scattered. Its members would be joined again, but would remain lifeless until the Spirit breathed into the people of God and Grace reawakened them.

The apostle had decided that one part of Israel would resist Christ until the "fulness of the Gentiles be come in" in the Church; then finally the Jews themselves would submit. Paul does mean that all the nations will some day be comprised wholly of believers and that all Jews in turn will become Christians. He, who had given the believers a picture of the great apostasy, was not unaware of what Jesus had announced, "But yet the Son of man, when he cometh, shall he find, think you, faith on earth?" But he imagines the future of the two human groups: Gentiles and Jews. He foresees times like our own when, though a certain people in one place or another may allow all deeper feeling for the Christian faith to wane, nevertheless there is not a single corner in the world in which the name of Christ has not resounded. The blood-offering, by the continuity of the daily Sacrifice, waters the fulness of the globe with a perpetual torrent of redeeming life. Thus understood, the Pauline prophecy is not far from fulfilment. The conversion of Israel is yet to be seen; for God has permitted men to confine themselves in their unbelief. Or

in the language of Paul, he himself has confined them, that he may release them by his pity.

And the mystic, instead of being frightened by the enigma of predestination, concludes in glorifying the mystery, "O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and of the knowledge of God: how incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable his ways!"

What essential service, in sum, did his Epistle perform? It gave a comprehensive view of the religious past and future of the human race. The past, in his eyes, receives but a radical condemnation: all men are under a law of death, the work of Adam, and no one is righteous. The Law of Moses made possible the discernment of sin in so far as it offends the Supreme Being, but does not provide the strength to be virtuous and to merit blessedness.

But the future, which is now the present, following the death and Resurrection of Christ, holds out hopes without end. All are justified by the faith, without the works of the Law; God is not only the God of the Jews, he is also the God of the Gentiles.

Man undeniably remains subject to the sufferings and temptations of the flesh. All nature groans with us, while awaiting the adoption of the children of God, that is, the renewal of the world after the blessed Coming, a state of peace and glory wherein all created things will participate in the transfiguration of the saints. But the trials of this world are nothing as compared with this supreme life. The law of sin assails our flesh in vain; grace comes to aid us in our frailty. "He that spared not even his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how hath he not also, with him, given us all things?

Who shall accuse against the elect of God? God that justifieth. Who is he that shall condemn? Christ Jesus. . . . Who is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? Or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or the sword? . . . But in all these things we overcome, because of him that hath loved us."

Paul does not discourse like a metaphysician, or like a moralist reading a paper at a public lecture. When he speaks of hunger or nakedness, he knows by experience the content beneath these words. When he mentions the "sword," he allows a glimpse of the martyrdom that will end his course in this city of Rome which he is to gain by his own blood.

He desires the faith to blossom into acts. His theological explanations, which are so rigorous and subtle that one wonders how the average believer could understand them, arrive at precepts of a limpid simplicity. Certain of these maxims, very general in their application, belong to the common fund of New Testament morality:

"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another. . . . Bless them that persecute you. . . . Rejoice with them that rejoice; weep with them that weep. . . . Condescend to things that are lowly. Be not wise in your own conceits."

There are some, on the contrary, which are more Jewish, and hark back to the Old Testament: "If thy enemy be hungry, give him to eat: if he thirst, give him water to drink: for thou shalt heap hot coals upon

his head." Other exhortations seem designed for political exigencies which might cause the believers of Rome to hesitate between obedience and revolt.

Paul—and Peter was to insist upon the same rules—makes it obligatory for every Christian to "be in subjection to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God." To the Jews, the true and only sovereign was God. From this principle the zealots, the intractable nationalists, arrived at the conclusion that since God was the sole master, they should pay the didrachma to the Temple, but not the tribute to Caesar. Jesus had peremptorily condemned this lawless intransigence. But certain Christians could find support in another saying of the Master's, "Then the children are free," and refuse obedience to pagan princes or magistrates. Paul wants them to be good subjects and exemplary citizens, not merely through fear of consequences, but also "for conscience' sake."

His exhortation is based on a mystical certainty. The prince, or the magistrate appointed by the prince, represents the divine attributes of power, justice, and pity. He would not wield or transmit his authority if God did not permit. Paul appears to assume that the authority will be just, "for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is a minister of God, an avenger for wrath to him that doeth evil."

Must we decide that the majesty of Rome overwhelmed him, as it also dazzled Josephus? In any event, he looked upon the empire as a powerful system working for the good of the peoples. He admired in the Romans their ability as organizers, the continuity of their views, and the equitable spirit of their legislation. No intelligent observer of Oriental chaos could have

disagreed with him. He had travelled too much not to appreciate the difference between the imperial highways and the others. While a Roman citizen, he rarely made use of his title; he took little pride in being numbered among the masters of the world. But the unity of the empire held out prodigious opportunities of expansion for the faith—and in Paul's eyes this was the true grandeur of Rome and its reason for existence from the standpoint of a supernatural future.

He by no means failed to realize the hypocritical ferocity and vice of Tiberius or the monstrosities of Caligula. At the time of this Epistle—in 56—Nero had already poisoned Britannicus, and was planning to kill his mother. At night, he ran through the streets of ill fame disguised as a slave, plundering the pedestrians and getting involved in disreputable squabbles. Yet the emperor's advisors were still under the direction of Seneca; the histrionic demagogue kept up the mask of generosity, and aimed to retain his popularity by extravagant bounties.

The apostle, judging the power of Rome by the sum total of its policies, prefers to emphasize its legality. Does he foresee that the Christians would not always be at peace with it?

He does not call upon them to confront the tyrants of this world like rebels. Rather, he warns them against the false ascetics, such as the Orphics, who abstain from all flesh, since it had once been living; or he tells them to distrust the Judaizers, who are ready to spread schism in this sturdy and peaceful Roman church.

But he apologizes for daring to warn the Romans of truths which they know and fully exemplify. He has done this because he owes the holy work of his gospel

to all the Gentiles. He is the minister of Jesus Christ, bringing him the faith of the baptized peoples like an ablution, that it may be acceptable.

Also, he wants to notify them of his visit by some other means than a mere announcement. He lets them share in his spiritual gifts; he "revives" in them the truths that they have already heard.

If he has not come to them previously, it is because he had to evangelize regions in which Christ was unknown. At present, he has done in the Orient the work that the Holy Ghost required of him. There is no further territory where he could establish churches. The West calls him; he will proceed to Spain, and stop at Rome on the way.

He mentions Spain twice. He has planned definitely to reach the end of the habitable world in the West, the pillars of Hercules. Moreover, he wants to make it clear that he has no desire to take hold of the Roman church, since others have founded it.

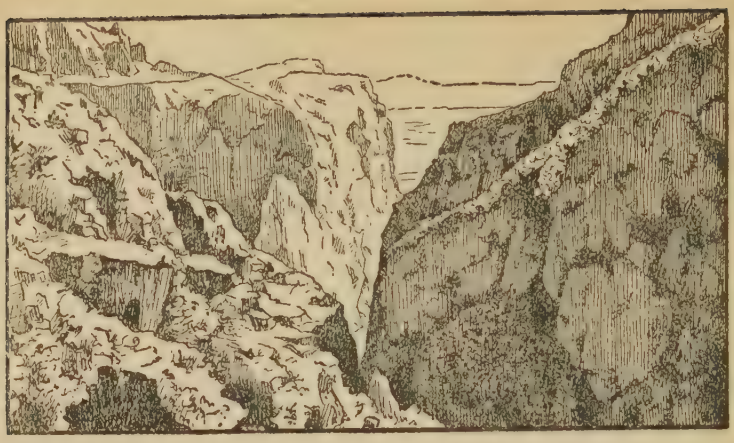
For the present, he is going on a trip to Jerusalem, bearing the abundant offerings of the churches of Macedonia and Achaia. And thus he insinuates that the Romans in their turn should remember the poor of Zion. But he foresees grave dangers:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me; that I may be delivered from them that are disobedient in Judea and that my ministration which I have for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints."

What forebodings are contained in these admissions! Paul knew the smouldering hatred of the Jews in Judea, and the distrust which had arisen even among the Chris-

tians of Jerusalem since he had proclaimed the futility of circumcision and the expiration of the Law. Nevertheless, he sets out on his journey in humility and submissiveness. He will go and place at the feet of James and the elders the alms of his industrious and patient charity.

He is virtually hurling himself into *the mouth of the lion*. It is now, perhaps, that he will show himself greatest.



XVI

PAUL GOES UP TO JERUSALEM A LAST TIME

HIS ARREST

THE apostle's allusion to Jewish ambuscades was doubly a prophecy. Prior to the plot in store for him at Jerusalem, he learned as he was leaving Corinth that Jews were setting a trap for him on the boat on which he would have to embark. Did they want to assassinate him on the sea during the night, or to throw him overboard? Had they informed some pirates that a passenger carrying a considerable sum of money would land at such and such a port, at such and such a time?

Paul was warned, and he decided to travel by land, at least as far as Macedonia. He departed with a certain number of companions who would serve as his escort. As he had written to the Corinthians, he surrounded himself with highly respected delegates, whom he added

to his party as convoys for the collection. We know the names of several. They included Timothy, the most assiduous of his helpers; Sopater of Beroea, son of Pyrrhus, a nobleman, which explains why his father's name is given; the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; Gaius of Derbe; two citizens of Ephesus, Tychicus and Trophimus. We shall again find Trophimus with Paul in the streets of Jerusalem, where his presence is to furnish a pretext for an uprising.

The caravan passed Thebes and Thermopylae, and crossed Thessaly. In Macedonia, Paul stopped among the Christians of Philippi, where he was received with great affection. He wanted to observe here the "days of unleavened bread." Tychicus and Trophimus had gone on to Troas, possibly to complete arrangements for the collection. The majority of the troop embarked at Neapolis and reached Troas within five days.

On Sunday evening, after he had been there for a week, Paul gathered the faithful "to break bread." As he had to leave the next morning, he prolonged the meeting until midnight. On this solemn occasion there were many lamps lit in the upper chamber, which was a church and dining-room combined, and was situated on the third floor of the house. The lights and the dense congregation added to the sultriness of the air; at this season, it was already hot.

A young man named Eutychus, or "the fortunate," was sitting on the sill of an open window. Weary and benumbed by the length of the pious discourse, he yielded to sleep, and fell from the third story to the ground. A cry of terror interrupted Paul's homily. Poor Eutychus was brought in and laid on a bed, as lifeless as a corpse. Paul hurried down and threw himself upon

the dead man, as Eli and Elijah had done, placing mouth against mouth, eyes to eyes, and hands upon hands. Then he rose up and said to the parents, "Make ye no ado, for his life is in him."

He acted as though he had not worked a miracle, but had merely brought the lad out of a swoon. He returned humbly and quietly to the upper chamber, broke bread, had supper with the brethren, and after talking vigorously until dawn, he departed. In this strange act, he had obviously been inspired. Unquestionably he had resuscitated Eutychus in the name of the Lord Jesus. But his immedate reaction from his initial fervour marks the Judaic element in his mysticism.

From Troas he reached Assos by land. We may still see there, between two square towers, the pointed arch of a gate beneath which he undoubtedly passed. He reembarked at the port of Assos, and stopped off at Mitylene. From here his ship headed for Chios, dropping anchor for the night off this island. The next day he went ashore at Samos; and the day after, the passengers left the ship at Miletus.

Paul could have gone on towards Ephesus from Miletus. But the Ephesians would have detained him, and he was pressed for time. He wanted to reach Jerusalem as quickly as possible, to celebrate the Pentecost there as a good Jew would have done.

But the elders of Ephesus and other nearby cities learned that he was passing. They met at his call, perhaps in a *proseuche* near the sea. For the most part they were people of humble status, workmen and small merchants, to whom Paul would hold out his rough hands as a sign of brotherhood and an evidence of his great

industriousness. He spoke to them as though, before engaging on his future perils, he wished to leave them a farewell message like a testament.

His address as we read it is only a partial record of what he said, and does not pretend to be a literal transcription. The scene is no less imposing than the departure of Hercules in Euripides' *Alcestis,* as the hero takes leave of King Admetus, the woman whom he has rescued, and their happy people. But it possesses another kind of beauty. Instead of confronting some obscure fate dictated by necessity, Paul goes up to Jerusalem with the delight of suffering like the Master and in behalf of the Master. He has not restored those he loves to the sweet light of living; he bestows upon them unending happiness. And nevertheless, the vision of Paradise does not detract from the human manifestations of a deep, naïve tenderness, at once hopeful and afflicted.

"Ye yourselves know," he said, "from the first day that I set foot in Asia, after what manner I was with you all the time, serving the Lord with all lowliness of mind, and with tears, and with trials which befell me by the plots of the Jews: How that I shrank not from declaring unto you anything that was profitable, and teaching you publicly, and from house to house, testifying both to Jews and to Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem,[1] not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost testifieth unto me in every city, saying

[1] These vague terms seem to mean: considering myself already as a captive; or: constrained by an impulse within.

that bonds and afflictions abide me. But I hold not my life of any account, as dear unto myself, so that I may accomplish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I went about preaching the kingdom, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I testify unto you this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.[2] For I shrank not from declaring unto you the whole counsel of God. Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock, in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the church of God, which he purchased with his own blood. I know that after my departure grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them. Wherefore watch ye, remembering that by the space of three years I ceased not to admonish every one night and day with tears. And now I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you the inheritance among all them that are sanctified. I coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me. In all things I gave you an example, how that so labouring ye ought to help the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."

When he had finished speaking, he knelt and prayed with them all. And they all wept copiously; and throwing their arms about Paul's neck, they kissed him. Above

[2] He means: If you are lost, I am innocent of your damnation, having done everything to save you.

all they were distressed because he had told them that they would never set eyes on him again. And they accompanied him as far as the deck of the vessel.

Driven by a favourable wind, Paul and his companions sailed directly from Miletus to Cos, then the next day to Rhodes and Patara. The ship went no farther, but there was another ship here leaving for Phoenicia. They re-embarked on this, with Cyprus to their left, sailing on towards Syria, and putting in at Tyre, where the boat stopped to unload a cargo.

There was a small group of Christians to welcome them at this port, which had been despoiled of its former opulence. They remained here for seven days, until they could again resume their voyage by sea. When they were leaving, the Christians with their wives and children came down to the shore with them. They all knelt in prayer, and as the ship moved off, the believers returned sadly to their homes.

Paul left the ship at Ptolemais, where he stopped and "saluted the brethren." The caravan proceeded by land to Caesarea, a city to which he would return bearing chains in behalf of Christ.

The church at Caesarea was under the guidance of Philip, an evangelist and deacon, and one of the seven Hellenists upon whom the Twelve had laid their hands. His four virgin daughters were endowed with the power of prophecy. He took Paul and the disciples into his house and was their host for several days. It is likely that favourable winds, and the good connections between vessels, had shortened the time which they had originally thought necessary to reach Jerusalem by Pentecost. And besides, Paul found in Philip a saint who

had seen Stephen and the earliest years of the Church; he had been a contemporary of the Lord.

While Paul was staying with Philip, a prophet named Agabus (the same perhaps who had announced at Antioch the famine of Jerusalem?) came into the house, and on perceiving Paul approached him, took hold of Paul's girdle, and acted as though he were binding his hands and feet with it. Then in very solemn accents, he said:

"Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles."

These words gave weight to the forebodings of the apostle. He was going to Jerusalem, where he would face great suffering. His companions and "they of that place" began to weep, begging him not to continue his voyage. But Paul rebuked them gently, and answered:

"What do ye, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus."

His readiness to meet hardship changed their sorrow into resignation. "The will of the Lord be done," they said.

Their distress at the realization that he would suffer was inconsistent with their belief that the Messiah had been glorified by suffering. But their naïve compassion is *truer* than the declamatory heroism of the hardened Stoic.

Paul's voyage to Jerusalem was like that of Jesus, who came to celebrate the Passover knowing that he himself was to be the great Victim. Paul but vaguely foresaw the adversities that awaited him. A divine elation more than compensated for the anxiety of this march towards

torment. He felt confident that he would survive the approaching calamities; he had a premonition that his work was not yet ended.

On arriving in the holy city, the caravan lodged with a certain Mnason, a Hellenist disciple, an early convert who came originally from Cyprus. Paul had a sister at Jerusalem whose son was later to stand his imprisoned uncle in good stead. It would be frivolous to wonder why he did not stay with her.

His greatest concern for the present was the reception which he might expect of James and the elders. The next day he went to see James; the leading Christians of Jerusalem were assembled at this meeting. We may imagine Paul placing the fruits of the collection at the feet of the elders. He brought them a tangible proof of the Gentiles' fervour. The assembly listened to him cordially as he rehearsed "what signs and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them."

The elders praised the Lord for his marvellous work. Yet some of them, who wanted both to test Paul's sympathy with the Jews and to protect him against their attacks, proposed an act of devotion:

"We have four men which have a vow on them; these take and purify thyself with them, and be at charges for them, that they may shave their heads: and all shall know that there is no truth in the things whereof they have been informed concerning thee; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, keeping the law."

The four impoverished men who could not fulfil their vows were Nazarites. They had consecrated themselves to God for a period of at least thirty days, and their vows involved three obligations: they should abstain from grapes and wine, should not shave their heads, and

should not make themselves unclean by coming near a corpse. The last of these observances seemed the most difficult. If a Nazarite trod the ground where a corpse lay buried, he became unclean. If he failed, even despite himself, to fulfil any one of these three requirements, he received thirty-nine strokes with the thongs, offered two turtle-doves or two young doves in the Temple, and recommenced his vow.

During his Nazariteship he allowed his hair to grow: then, at the end of the "days of his vow of separation," he shaved it off, and the hair was placed on the sacrificial fire offered in his name. It was an onerous sacrifice, since Moses required "one he-lamb of the first year, one ewe-lamb of the first year, and one ram," besides a "basket of unleavened bread and cakes of fine flour." When indigent Nazarites could not meet the Law's prescriptions, they called on some generous Israelites for assistance. Without hesitation, Paul complied with the elders' wish.

"Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them went into the temple, declaring the fulfilment of the days of purification, until the offering was offered for every one of them."

Overly inquisitive commentators have wanted to inquire into the source from which he derived the necessary money for four lambs, four ewes, four rams, and the other items. It is more important to understand the spirit with which he participated in a Mosaic form of worship.

His act obviously had no element of affectation about it. And it was not done merely to enable him to fit into his Jewish environment and avoid the expected attacks by losing himself in the multitude of pilgrims. Nor did

he comply through penitential humility. No, he came to the Temple as a pilgrim. It was quite simple for him to associate himself with an act of piety. How did his gospel prevent him from assisting needy people bound by a vow which they were finding it difficult to fulfil?

He had no intention whatsoever of destroying the Law and its prescriptions. His act of charity proved to both his brethren and himself that, whenever his principles permitted him, he followed the religious discipline of his ancestors. He must have found some mystical satisfaction in this. Though not a Nazarite, had he not taken a vow himself on leaving Corinth? And is it not most likely that he had hoped to discharge his obligations in the Temple, in accordance with the accepted practice?

And when he came before the priests with the four Nazarites whom he was befriending, he made his declaration with all the earnestness of a devout Jew. He had, moreover, a sense of the liberating power in charity. He understood more clearly than the priests what the immolation of the Lamb really meant—and he was offering his own life, which was threatened at every moment, for the welfare of the good Nazarites and all Israel.

Assuredly, a rigid sectarian would not have allowed himself to take any step that was contrary to his system of beliefs. Paul's action could have been condemned by his own words. He had told the Galatians that every man who received circumcision was "a debtor to the whole law," and he repeated this incessantly to both Gentiles and Jews. Thus if he continued to observe a single precept of the Law, he would be under the obligation of accepting it in its totality.

Did he desire or practise such submission? He had only too often asserted that the Law was not necessary, and that the life of the righteous man is in faith. And if a doctrine is no longer necessary because it has expired, it promptly becomes useless, and even reprehensible.

But the Church was to break with the synagogue only by degrees. In the matter of prayers, rites, and holidays, the rupture would never be complete. *In a sense,* the great rule of all organic life, which says that nature must not progress by leaps, applies to the supernatural realities. The Old Testament contained the elements of the New; Jesus had affirmed that he came not to annihilate the Law but to fulfil it. He had submitted to the essential aspects of its observances as though he were giving a new sanction to their holiness. His disciple Paul thought that he might well carry out a rite of such venerable origin and so forceful in its motives. Furthermore, the Nazariteship was an ascetic form of worship whereby the devotee temporarily withdrew from the world to associate himself with the Eternal.

Paul does not even appear to have considered it as a question of conscience, and to have asked himself whether he was right to act as he did. The intimate Voice prompted him. And besides, in coming to the Temple for prayer and public sacrifice in a ceremony which was announced and paid for in advance, he would be exposing himself to the vengeance of his adversaries. Paul knew that the Spirit demanded this of him. He was not interested in knowing how much latitude God would allow the hand of his persecutors. He did as the humblest of the pilgrims would have done.

On seeing the Temple again, did Paul permit himself to be overwhelmed by the magnificence of a structure

which seemed splendid and powerful enough to defy all time? He knew the prophecy of the Lord, and saw that "the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost."

Did he, despite his emancipation, feel a racial pride as he crossed the second terrace, higher than the atrium of the Gentiles, and came forward to enter the tabernacle of the Jews? Inscriptions in Latin and Greek on the frontal of the pylons warned the profane, "Let no stranger penetrate beyond the balustrade which surrounds the holy place and the inclosure. Whoever is caught there will have but himself to blame for his resultant death."

He felt that in the past the exclusion of the Gentiles had been just. But it made him realize anew the ineradicable error of Israel. He would not have brought even a baptized pagan into the Temple. Nevertheless, he was accused of doing so—and it was this charge which caused the uprising against him. Some Asiatic Jews who came from Ephesus for the Pentecost had recognized Paul walking about the city with the Ephesian Trophimus. And as they knew him to be a pagan by birth, they started the atrocious rumour, "He brought Greeks also into the Temple."

The day when Paul entered the Temple for the sacrifice of the Nazarites, some Jews discovered him in the parvis of the Israelites. They began to curse him. Then, leaning over the balustrade at the top of the steps which descended to the crowded lower terrace, they cried:

"Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men everywhere against the people, and the law, and this place: and moreover he . . . hath defiled this holy place."

Paul protested, and attempted to answer them. A

mass of people surged from below, attacking him on the steps and dragging him towards the entrance of the Temple. With their great reverence for this place, they would not have dared to pollute the enclosure by a murder. As soon as the mob had passed through the doors on the north, the guards and Levites locked them. They were afraid that Paul might enter, or be pursued and massacred in these sacred precincts.

Paul, assailed on all sides, prepared for an inevitable death. But in the gallery of the Fortress Antonia, overlooking the Temple, the garrison of Roman soldiers had heard the uproar and followed the turbulent throng. They hastened to notify the tribune that "all Jerusalem was in confusion." He quickly gathered up the centurions and legionaries that he met on his way, and they hurried down the two stairways leading to the esplanade. With upraised sword the tribune divided the populace. Paul was kept on his feet by the pressure of the howling mob around him. His face was covered with blood, but he retained an expression of fearlessness.

The tribune asked what he had done, and ordered that he be turned over to the soldiers. His voice was so thunderous and commanding that the enraged Jews relinquished their prize. But some were shouting one thing and some another. In the midst of all the tumult he could not understand who this man was, and for what crime they wanted to kill him. He merely concluded that the case was serious. As a measure of precaution, and in order to quiet the mob, he had Paul's wrists bound with chains, and ordered the guard to lead him away.

As the soldiers were mounting the stairs again with

their prisoner, the leaders saw that the unbeliever was escaping them. They turned to the populace and incited them, shouting, "Away with him!" The detachment of Romans could hardly resist the raging mob. The soldiers who held the prisoner, fearing that he might be snatched from them, fastened his chains to their own arms.

The tribune Lysias mounted the steps anxiously behind them. He was a Greek who had not been in charge of the cohort in the tower for long, and he feared the *furor Judaicus*. He was not unaware that during the holidays the state of religious exaltation gave added impetus to the national fanaticism of this people. He had been told of the attack on Jerusalem which an Egyptian Jew claiming to be the Messiah had attempted some months previously, when several thousand beggars had gathered in the desert and followed this false Christ to the Mount of Olives. He had boasted that he would drive the Romans from the city. At his voice the walls would fall, as the walls of Jericho had toppled at the sound of the trumpets of Joshua. The procurator Felix, with horsemen and legionaries, and assisted by the Jews, had gone out to meet this horde and put them to rout. But the leader had managed to escape. Lysias, seeing the people in such a frenzy and hearing their ferocious demands for Paul, thought that he was the "Egyptian." The apostle must have looked as wild and hirsute as a bandit. His clothes were torn; his hair was in disorder, and covered with dust and spittle. Up to this time he had not opened his lips—could his words have been heard? Suddenly, on reaching the top of the stairs, he appealed to the tribune in a deferent but energetic voice:

"May I say something unto thee?"

The tribune was astounded to hear him speak Greek, and with the accents of an orator, a person of culture. Then this prisoner was not a brigand. A ranger of the desert would have talked in some barbarous Semitic dialect!

"Dost thou know Greek?" he exclaimed. "Art thou not then the Egyptian?"

Paul, with calm pride, answered him:

"I am a Jew, of Tarsus in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and I beseech thee, *give me leave to speak unto the people.*"

This sublime idea had just occurred to him like an inspiration. He would proclaim Christ before the Temple; he would harangue "his brethren," who detested him without even knowing him. He had here an immense audience. All Israel was represented by the Jews of Jerusalem, their priests, and the Jews of the Diaspora —while the deputies of the Gentiles would be Lysias, the centurions, and the soldiers.

The tribune consented; he was curious to see the effect of the prisoner's eloquence. Paul's chains were loosened, and he turned towards the rioters, who were still brandishing fists and clubs. He lifted his arms with their heavy chains as a sign that he desired to speak.

This little man with the flaming eyes, bald, sweating, dusty, his clothes in tatters, suddenly seemed as powerful as a *nabhi* as he stood up before the enormous white tower. His expression and gestures had something about them which would have revealed to a mystical throng the emissary from *on high.*

He began talking in Aramaic, the dialect of the Jews:

"Brethren and fathers, hear ye the defence which I now make unto you."

Beneath the dominating accents of his voice and the sonority of the Hebraic syllables, the insistent uproar died down to a murmur—and of a sudden the silence became profound.

Paul once more described the error of his youth and the vision which had enlightened him. In his own vindication, he reminded the Jews of Palestine that he had once been an extreme defender of the Pharisaic traditions, and had persecuted those who transgressed them. The high priest of the time, and the whole Sanhedrin, could testify to his conduct. But on the road to Damascus, Jesus had hurled him to the ground; he had submitted to the will of the God of his *fathers*. In lofty and magnificent language he confirmed the divine unity of the two Testaments!

Why had he preached so far from Jerusalem, as though he were fleeing from the Temple and his brethren? Because in the Temple itself another vision had commanded him, "Depart, for I will send thee forth *far hence unto the Gentiles.*"

Up to this point his audience had been subdued and stupefied into silence. But at the mention of the Gentiles the pride of the people and their rancours against the foreigner reawakened their fury. Again the pack broke into an uproar, "Away with such a fellow from the earth: for it is not fit that he should live." They shouted obscenities, rent their garments and tossed them into the air, stamped their feet, and snatching up handfuls of dust, threw it in the direction of the infidel.

The tribune understood poorly what the orator was

saying to enrage the Jews, but he wanted to end the excitement. At a sign from him, the soldiers led the prisoner into the castle. The doors were closed. The crowd below was powerless, but continued shouting.

Their persistence wore on the tribune, and his ill humour was directed against the man who caused this seditious movement. He looked upon him as a popular agitator who deserved to be placed on the cross like a slave. By what crime had he aroused the people's hatred? Instead of questioning him, he issued a command to one of the centurions, who had Paul bound to a post. He was suspended by his hands in such a way that his feet barely touched the ground; his clothing had been removed, and two men came forward bearing horrible whips provided with bits of metal. These implements were used in scourging prisoners to force a confession.

Paul had no fear of suffering. His flesh knew the rods; it had quivered under their sting. But he was exalted: for at this moment, with his back turned to his executioners and his hands stretched high against the post, he resembled his Master Jesus Christ, bound to the pillar to be whipped. Nevertheless, the day of his martyrdom had not yet come; he had a task to finish in this world. They would perhaps have beaten him to death. But he spoke to the centurion who was standing near the post—and his words assured him of life:

"Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?"

The centurion ran in astonishment to inform Lysias. The tribune arrived and asked Paul:

"Tell me, art thou a Roman?"

"Yes," answered Paul. And he doubtless gave proofs of his citizenship.

The tribune, who appreciated the gravity of such an error, hastened to have his prisoner set free. Then he tried to flatter him by familiarity.

"With a great sum obtained I this citizenship," he confided.

And Paul replied with dignity:

"But I am a Roman born."

His firm attitude doubled Lysias' anxiety. He expected that the Jew, being a Roman citizen, would seek reprisals. He feared the fury of the Jews of Jerusalem. To please them he had commanded Paul to be scourged. What would be their indignation on learning that this execrated man was under the protection of the Roman authorities! This boastful and foppish Greek, who was a demagogue and a diplomat, thought of an evasion. He would require the prisoner to appear before the Sanhedrin. This expedient would be flattering to a body which was jealous of its ancient prerogatives; and if he found that the grievances of the Jews bore solely on religious quarrels, he would propose to the procurator —who lived at Caesarea—that Paul be set at liberty. For the rest, his subsequent conduct indicates an unfeigned sympathy. He had recognized the purity and wholesomeness of the apostle.

The next day he notified the Sanhedrin to meet for Paul's trial. The high priest Ananias *himself* came to preside over the session. This old man had a reputation for greed and ferocity. He sent his slaves to snatch the tithes from the hands of the sacrificers; and any priest who opposed him received a beating. He was a brutal and cynical Sadducee, who believed in nothing but carnal pleasure, money, and the privileges of his caste.

Paul found himself in a semicircular room like the

one in which he had beheld the ecstasy of Stephen, while the judges ground their teeth and stopped their ears. If his part in their crime returned to trouble his memory, he did not reveal it. He did not recognize the right of his judges to pass judgment upon his religion, but he looked upon them as brethren whom he would like to cure of their blindness. Before being questioned, he addressed them, "Brethren, I have lived before God in all good conscience until this day."

The high priest was enraged, as he considered this word "brethren" slanderous. "Smite him on the mouth," he commanded the men standing near Paul.

Paul heard the order without realizing who pronounced it. Did he receive the blows, or did he forestall them by his reply? It was harsh, and blasting, "God shall smite thee, thou *whited wall:* and sittest thou to judge me according to the law, and commandest me to be smitten contrary to the law?"

Strange and formidable retort! Paul was not aware that his words were aimed at Ananias, the high priest. Nevertheless, he prophesied—and his prophecy was to be substantiated. For in September of the year 66, on the seventeenth day of the month, Ananias was pursued by factionists, and caught and slain in an aqueduct where he had hidden with his brother Ezechias.

"They that stood by" protested, "Revilest thou God's high priest?" "I wist not, brethren," Paul answered, "that he was high priest." Otherwise, he explained, he would have remained silent: "For it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of a ruler of thy people."

The brutality of Ananias had stirred him to the depths, adding a prophetic impulse to his spontaneous wrath. Ananias belonged to the family of Anna, who

had condemned Jesus. From Paul's lips he heard the announcement of his future punishment. And like Jesus, Paul challenged the chief priests with their hypocritical contradictions; these defenders of the Law were violating and destroying it! But he immediately retracted; he would not scandalize the weak; this man who was accused of discarding the Law wanted to remain submissive to it.

What took place in the subsequent debate? From Lysias' report to the procurator we learn that the meeting turned into a theological dispute. The Pharisees of the assembly quarrelled with the Sadducees. The former believed in a future life, the latter did not. On seeing them at odds, Paul tried to inject his Christian theology into their conflict. "Brethren," he exclaimed, "I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees: touching the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question."

He wanted to work up to the point of naming the risen Christ. From the judiciary standpoint, it was skilful dialectic. The tribune, who was present with centurions and soldiers, now considered the accused man's innocence as obvious. And Paul's statement set the Pharisees and Sadducees to wrangling furiously.

But there was a danger that the latter group, in exasperation, might take out their resentment on him. The tribune, who did not wish to make it seem that he was giving Paul military protection, had left him quite alone in the hemicycle, surrounded by the judges, scribes, and apparitors. A certain number of Sadducees arose, and with a flourish of fists formed a threatening circle about the little Jew. They would have dragged him outside and clubbed him or strangled him on the

spot. He left this cavern of death in safety. Rome rescued him from Israel.

The two turbulent days had exhausted him. That evening he suffered a crisis of despair; his one desire was "to depart and be with Christ." Here at close range, at the very centre of their power, he had seen the Jews' incurable resistance to the truth. Furthermore, he realized what was in store for him if he fell into their hands. But the Lord visited him in prison and said to him, "Be of good cheer: for as thou hast testified concerning me at Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome."

Nevertheless, the Jews were not minded to leave things as they were. Paul was accused of an offence committed in the Temple; the Sanhedrin declared itself competent to judge him. Thus the chief priests would require him to appear a second time for a more thorough examination of his case.

Their plan was to dispose of him. The day following, some of the Jews who were enraged at his escape formed a conspiracy. They swore under solemn oath that "they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed Paul." [3] They sought out the chief priests and secured their aid in the plan of attack. Paul should be again brought before the Sanhedrin, and as he was passing between the Antonia Tower and the Temple, they would stab him.

The conspirators were more than forty in number. Some of them kept the secret poorly, or else it was

[3] Their vow, which seems unbelievable and chimerical, is equivalent to the simple resolve: "It is necessary that Paul be killed as soon as possible." The Jews admitted these exaggerated formulae in their vows. Recall James swearing neither to eat nor drink until he had seen the Lord raised from the dead. We may read in the Tract Aboda Zara: "When a man has promised by a vow that he will refrain from eating, woe to him if he eats, woe to him if he does not eat. If he eats, he transgresses against his vow; if he does not eat, he transgresses against his life."

divulged by the Pharisees who had said of Paul in the Sanhedrin, "We find no evil in this man."

Paul's nephew got wind of it. He hurried to the castle, obtained permission to see his uncle, and warned him of what was on foot. Paul asked one of the centurions to lead the young man to the tribune. Lysias received him amicably. But when he had heard the news, he ordered the nephew, "Tell no man that thou hast signified these things to me."

Without compromising himself, he wanted to save Paul, and especially to rid himself of a cumbersome prisoner. Calling two centurions, he commanded them, "Make ready two hundred soldiers to go as far as Caesarea, and horsemen threescore and ten, and spearmen two hundred, at the third hour of the night." And he also told them to "provide beasts, that they might set Paul thereon, and bring him safe unto Felix the governor."

Indeed, the governor alone could decide whether Paul should be set at liberty. And the tribune wrote a letter, to be delivered to the governor by the officer who was in charge of the horsemen:

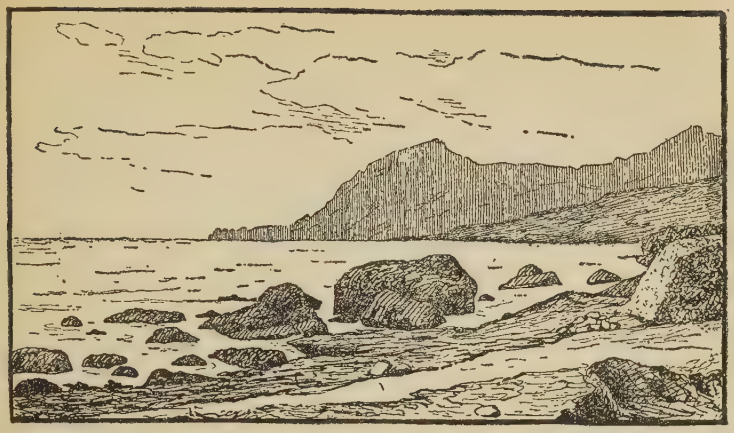
"Claudius Lysias unto the most excellent governor Felix, greeting.

"This man was seized by the Jews, and was about to be slain of them, when I came upon them with the soldiers, and rescued him, having learned that he was a Roman. And desiring to know the cause wherefore they accused him, I brought him down unto their council: Whom I found to be accused about questions of their law, but to have nothing laid to his charge worthy of death or of bonds. And when it was shown to me that

there would be a plot against the man, I sent him to thee forthwith, charging his accusers also to speak against him before thee. Farewell."

It may seem exorbitant, or even ridiculous, that such a large force should be ordered to serve as Paul's convoy. Yet it is explainable; for Lysias was afraid of the Jews; his words, "Tell no man," were a naïve confession of his uneasiness, as was his precaution in inviting the accusers to refer their complaints to Felix. He wanted to make a show of vigilance. We find in him the Oriental, with his need of exaggeration, the Greek of the decadence—pliant, blustering, and timid. His report alters the truth on one point. According to him, he had rescued Paul from the Jews on learning that he was a Roman citizen. As a matter of fact, he was not aware of it at that time. Who would have told him? But he wants to emphasize the value he attaches to the title of Roman—he a citizen of recent date, a parvenu who has paid a high price for his distinction.

Thus, that night Paul mounted an ass or a camel and went down from Jerusalem in grand style, with an escort worthy of a king. He left the holy city never to return. Rome, on the other hand, awaited him. This file of soldiers, and these officers surrounding him to protect him from the invisible peril, were the power of Rome mobilized in the service of the faith. Tomorrow, perhaps, there would be Christians among them. They would address Paul as their brother; they would break the bread of love with him; they would kneel beneath the apostle's hand; and his word would be for them the word of God. The prisoner departed like a conqueror.



XVII

THE APPEAL TO CAESAR

CAESAREA, built by Herod, with its vast port bordered by vaulted warehouses, seemed almost a Roman city. Its streets were laid out with strict regularity. Many of the houses had an Italian aspect, with peristyle and a court planted with shrubs, as at Pompeii. Here Augustus and the Caesars had their statues and their temple. The tower of the structure in which Saint Paul was confined—and a portion of whose wall remains standing today—is the tower of a Roman castle.

He arrived towards evening with his escort of seventy horsemen, the company having covered in the day the stretch of twenty-six miles between Antipatris and Caesarea. Once the mountains with their opportunities for ambush were passed, the foot-soldiers had left him at Antipatris and returned to Jerusalem.

After reading the tribune's letter, the governor,

Antonius Felix, immediately began questioning Paul. He asked what province Paul came from. Despite the fatigue of his journey, Paul would have preferred to offer his defence forthwith. He was eager to be pronounced free and to embark for Italy. But Felix was evasive, and postponed his examination of the case. "I will hear thy cause," he said, "when thine accusers also are come."

At their first contact he seemed to be made uneasy by the superiority of the apostle; he remained on the defensive. This Felix, who was a former slave, an Arcadian by birth, was one of the most despicable of functionaries; he well deserved the judgment of Tacitus, "In all manner of cruelty and debauchery he wielded the powers of a king with the soul of a slave."

He had been freed by Claudius—and as the prince's favourite, Pallas, was his brother, he felt that anything was permitted him. He had taken a Jewess, Drusilla, from her husband, King Aziz. He bartered with brigands for a share in their plunder, and bartered with the chief priests for protection against the brigands. He was quick to see that there were complex interests involved in Paul's trial, with the possibility of extorting money—and this explains why, instead of giving him his liberty, he ordered him to be held in the palace of Herod.

At Jerusalem, Lysias had hastened to inform Ananias and the other prominent Jews that they could bring their complaint before the governor. They lost no time. Within five hours the delegation from the Sanhedrin appeared in the streets of Caesarea, accompanied by a young Latin orator named Tertullus. The members of

the Sanhedrin came before the governor to present their case against Paul. The next morning, the prisoner was called to the praetorium of the magistrate, and Tertullus pleaded against him; or rather, he repeated in Greek the accusation of the Sanhedrin.

He began with the usual sycophantic adulation of the Roman potentate, praising him for the era of peace and prosperity that Judaea enjoyed under his tutelage. Then he abruptly launched an attack upon this "pestilent fellow, . . . a mover of insurrections among all the Jews throughout the world, and a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes." Paul had tried to profane the Temple; the Jews had prevented him and wanted to judge him by their Law. But the tribune Lysias had taken him from them, and had ordered the plaintiff to appear before the governor.

He was implying, though he did not venture to say so directly, "It is for us to try this man; turn him over to us."

Tertullus, the spokesman in the pay of Ananias, argued bluntly and awkwardly. Infuriated hatred is always bungling. By implicating the tribune, the members of the Sanhedrin aroused the governor's resentment, thus putting Paul in an advantageous position. The latter included in his exordium a word of praise for Felix, but he did not stoop to flattery. "Forasmuch as I know," he said, "that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do cheerfully make my defence."

He had gone up to Jerusalem because he wanted to *worship*. They could scrutinize his actions from the first day of his pilgrimage to the seventh. He had not con-

versed with a single person in the Temple, nor incited a mob in the synagogues or in the streets. He defied his adversaries to prove a single offence.

"But," he continued, "this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers, believing all things which are according to the law, and which are written in the prophets: Having hope towards God, which these [the Pharisees] also look for, that there shall be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust. Herein do I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men alway. Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings."

The outline of this speech demonstrates once more the soundness and simplicity of Paul's dialectic: the Christian "way" is not rebellion against the Law; Paul brings nothing new or heretical in announcing the Resurrection and the Judgment. But he wants to reveal to the Jews the Judge, the risen Christ, whom they have failed to recognize and have denied.

When confronting Felix, he does not seem to have covered the full extent of his doctrine. The governor was familiar with the trends of the Nazarene sect; he must have given Paul to understand that his apology was enough. He perceived the emptiness of the Jews' complaints. Nevertheless, he wished to handle Ananias and the prominent Sadducees with caution. Instead of granting Paul his freedom, he deferred sentence under pretext of waiting for supplementary information.

"When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will determine your matter."

But if Paul remained confined in the tower of Herod, the centurion who had charge of him was instructed to

"have indulgence." He was relieved of his chains; his friends could do things for him and even visit him. He received news of Jerusalem through Philip the evangelist, other believers of Caesarea, and doubtless his travelling companions, Luke, Timothy, and Aristarchus the Thessalonian. To the apostle the right to continue his gospel by preaching and directing meant everything.

Throughout the years of his captivity, his great voice was never silent for a single day. Even if brought to the depths of a dungeon, he would have sung the glory of Christ, bringing to completion the sufferings of the Lord for his mystical body, the Church. His quality as a Roman citizen and his power of persuasion everywhere brought him respect, so that each of his prisons would become a pulpit where his pitiable plight might serve as comment and amplification to his doctrine.

In the prison at Caesarea, he was a source of uneasiness to Felix's entourage and to Felix himself. Drusilla took a notion that she would like to see him and hear him speak. Like her sister Bernice, she was a cosmopolitan and ambitious Jewess, both mystical and perverse. The occult sciences fascinated her. She had often consulted Simon Magus, and Felix had utilized the prestige of this sorcerer to induce her to leave her husband Aziz and live with him. She was fifteen or sixteen at the time —and was beautiful.

She took a capricious interest in the Jewish preacher. When brought before her and Felix, Paul spoke to them of the faith in Jesus Christ. But with the rudeness of a prophet, like John the Baptist before Herod Antipas, he "reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and the judgment to come." Felix interrupted him in fright, "Go thy way for this time; and when I have a conven-

ient season, I will call thee unto me." Drusilla, who was still more strongly affected by the revelation of the Nazarene, made no attempt to hear him again. She, along with her son by Felix, was later to perish beneath the ashes of the volcano at Pompeii.

The governor sent for Paul "the oftener," in the hope that the Christian communities would offer a big ransom for his liberty. But as Paul treated his greedy intentions with scorn, he allowed the trial to drag on indefinitely. This abominable practice was customary with him. Josephus could have applied to him what he said of Albinus, one of his successors, "He kept in prison only those who had given him nothing."

But he himself fell into disgrace. In the year 55 Nero had greatly curtailed the power of Pallas, a protégé of Agrippina; but the freedman still had enough authority to protect Felix. When Poppaea became an influence over the prince, she obtained the governor's recall. The Jews had urged her to act; they could easily prove the violence and malpractice of which they had complained.

Before his departure, Felix ordered Paul to be again locked up in gaol. He hoped by this mean-minded compliance to regain the favour of the Sadducees and avoid the rage of their reprisals.

For two years Paul suffered captivity. There was no visible end to this trial. When his chains were again clamped upon him, they were doubly heavy. But in his soul he heard the psalm of his deliverance, the promise of the Lord, "So must thou bear witness also at Rome."

Porcius Festus, the successor of Felix, had been chosen as a magistrate who was zealous, just, and wise. Within three days of his arrival he set out for Jerusalem. He wanted to show the leaders of Israel his concern for their

interests. Paul's enemies took this favourable moment to condemn him violently, insisting that he should be sent back to Jerusalem and transferred to their own jurisdiction. Festus, who was warned that hired assassins would attempt an attack between Caesarea and Jerusalem, deceived the members of the Sanhedrin by the firm response "that he himself was about to depart thither shortly." And he said, "Let them therefore which are of power among you, go down with me, and if there is anything amiss in the man, let them accuse him."

On his return the next morning, he summoned Paul to the praetorium. Before the tribunal, on the platform, which he was made to ascend that he might be in fuller view, the accused looked down upon his accusers, who were ranged in a semicircle as in the Sanhedrin. He could have said with the psalmist, "Many bulls have compassed me." The high priest, Ismael, son of Phabi, had come to crush him. Jewish masters of eloquence built up their incriminations with skilled perfidy. The most serious move was to show him in the light of a *rebel.* In attacking the Jewish traditions, they asserted, this man was defying the Roman people, who were pledged to defend them. In the name of a certain Jesus, he held out the promise of a kingdom which was superior to all terrestrial empires. Paul prophesied the destruction of these, announcing a universal Day of Judgment at the tribunal of a King who would summon all the sovereigns of the earth to appear before him. This doctrine endangered Roman peace, and was an insult to Caesar. The man who told of it was scandalous, and should not be permitted to live. But they had not been able to bring up a single fact in support of their

diatribes. With the assurance of the innocent, Paul replied:

"Neither against the law of the Jews, nor against the temple, nor against Caesar, have I sinned at all."

Festus perceived clearly that the trial hinged about a matter of religion and "one Jesus, who was dead, whom Paul affirmed to be alive." The rabid insistence of the Jews embarrassed him; furthermore, both the Roman law and his own sense of justice required him to protect a citizen. He thought of a political expedient to satisfy the Jews while setting his own conscience at rest. Suddenly he asked Paul, with no concealed intention of setting a trap for him, "Wilt thou go to Jerusalem, and there be judged of these things before me?"

Paul knew that the governor could not compel a Roman citizen to accept the verdict of a Jewish tribunal without appeal. Festus' question made him feel his advantage more clearly:

"I am," he said, "standing before Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged: to the Jews have I done no wrong, as thou also very well knowest. If then I am a wrong-doer, and have committed anything worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if none of those things is true, whereof these accuse me, no man can give me up unto them. I appeal unto Caesar."

Beneath this clap of thunder, the Jews bowed their heads. Festus retired to deliberate with his council. He returned, pronounced the sentence, "Thou hast appealed unto Caesar: unto Caesar shalt thou go."

Had these words, "I appeal unto Caesar," been pronounced by some other Jew, they would merely have signified the confidence of the Israelites in a supreme authority that dominated all factions and private inter-

ests. The Jews as a body were overwhelmed by the prestige of the empire; they believed in its stable future; they even fought in its armies, where they were looked upon as good soldiers. If Jerusalem fell in 70 A.D., this catastrophe was caused to a great extent by the inertia of the Jews abroad, who were too attached to Rome, or were too egotistical.

As pronounced by Paul, the appeal to Caesar marks a greater and more decisive moment. The Church declares the justice of the synagogue extinct; it places its cause in the hands of the empire which will eventually attempt to exterminate it, but which it then considered as a protector. Furthermore, it would gradually permeate and convert the empire, while Israel would resist until the fulness of time.

Thus Paul would see the faithful of Rome; he would appear before Caesar; and Caesar would hear the word of God. The decision of the governor made him visibly happy.

Some days later, Festus received a visit from the young king Agrippa II and his sister Bernice. Agrippa had been raised at Rome, in the court of Claudius, where he was trained to become one of those petty rulers whom the empire was so apt at transforming into lackeys. He lived with Bernice, and their intimacy scandalized the Jews. When Bernice, who was the widow of her uncle Herod, had cohabited with her brother, their relationship unloosed malevolent tongues, and in order to silence them, she offered her hand to Polemon, the king of Cilicia. He accepted, as she was immensely rich. She abandoned him and returned to her brother. Later, as we learn from Tacitus, she was able to please old Vespasian "by the magnificence of her gifts."

Titus was to love her with a different love from that pictured in Racine.

This Oriental woman, more bewitching and perverted than Drusilla, had spells of devotion. She came to Jerusalem to fulfil a vow of Nazariteship. She would necessarily have been concerned at times with the Christian teachings. Her sister had told her of Paul, and she in turn was curious to approach him. Festus anticipated her desire; he himself wanted to know Agrippa's impression of the man whom he was sending to Caesar, as this would help him when stating in his report whether Paul deserved the stubborn hatred of the Jews.

The next day, in the course of an official reception, Paul was brought before the officers of the five cohorts of the garrison and the pompous retinue that accompanied Agrippa and Bernice. His arms were bound, he had been aged by his term in prison—but for all his humility as a captive, he was completely at ease, and wore an expression of grave confidence, the satisfaction of knowing that he had not testified in vain. Agrippa, who was touched by his dolorous and sanctified appearance, himself invited him to present his apology.

Paul held out his hands, his light chains permitting him this customary gesture. The company listened to him at first as to a strange and attractive visionary. He repeated the story of his wanderings and the account of the vision which had profoundly altered him. He insisted upon the Jewish orthodoxy of his doctrine:

"And now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain. And concerning this hope I am

accused by the Jews, O King! . . . For this cause the Jews seized me in the temple, and essayed to kill me. Having therefore obtained the help that is from God, I stand unto this day testifying both to small and great, saying nothing but what the prophets and Moses did say should come; how that the Christ must suffer, and how that he first by the resurrection of the dead should proclaim light both to the people and to the Gentiles."

Up to this point they had remained silent, some in astonishment and others engrossed in the revelation of a mystery. But Festus, as the representative of the divine Caesars, could not allow a Jew in his presence to proclaim as his true God a universal Messiah risen from the dead, the hope of Moses and the prophets. Furthermore, the hypothesis of the resurrection and the judgment struck him as extravagant. "Paul, thou art mad," he cried suddenly; "thy much learning doth turn thee to madness." The gruffness and abruptness of his words arrested Paul's discourse, but did not disconcert him.

"I am not mad, most excellent Festus," he replied; "but speak forth words of truth and soberness. For the king knoweth of these things, unto whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things is hidden from him; for this hath not been done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."

Far from repelling this bold statement, Agrippa answered pleasantly, "With but little persuasion thou wouldest fain make me a Christian." He spoke lightly, as a dilettante prince and man of the world, but it would be wrong to think him ironical. Agrippa was genuinely moved by the persuasive force of Paul's faith

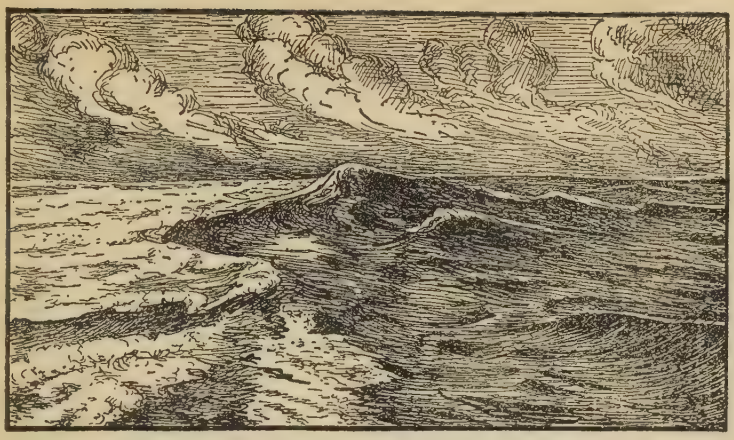
—and he did not pause to consider what his conversion would have required of him. With much charm and freedom, Paul encouraged him.

"I would to God, that whether with little or with much, not thou only, but also all that hear me this day, might become such as I am, except these bonds."

Paul admitted the annoyance of his chains; but he would take upon himself alone all the burden of earthly sorrows if the brethren might thereby obtain at no further cost the gift that he had received. In this witty rejoinder there is the gleam of marvellous charity. This detail is not merely the culmination of the episode; it supports it throughout; for it has no meaning except in so far as it ends the particular scene recorded by the historian.

The smiles and approving murmurs of the company gave evidence that he had won their good favour. When they had withdrawn, the guests said to one another of the apostle, "This man doeth nothing worthy of death or of bonds." Agrippa even suggested to the governor a course which the latter did not dare to follow: "This man might have been set at liberty, if he had not appealed unto Caesar."

Paul was to disembark upon the soil of Italy with his arms in chains. Rome owed it to herself to defray the full travelling expenses of such a guest. But he nearly failed to arrive at his destination.



XVIII

THE DREADFUL SEA VOYAGE

IT was late autumn; the fast of Kippur was over. The weather was still clear; a good wind was blowing. The ship that carried Paul was a coasting vessel from Adramyttium in Mysia. There were other prisoners on board, some of whom, perhaps, had been condemned to death, and were destined to provide amusement for the Roman populace by encountering the wild beasts of the circus. They were being convoyed by a centurion "of the Augustan band" and a detachment of soldiers.

Some of Paul's disciples—Timothy, Luke, Aristarchus the Thessalonian—found it possible to embark with him as passengers. The sea fatigued him, particularly owing to the state of physical depletion in which the two years of imprisonment had left him. And he doubtless travelled on the deck, exposed to the squalls and the

rain, or among the poor devils who were crowded into the fetid steerage.

In one day, the south wind carried the ship as far as Sidon, where he landed. Whether Paul had already gained the esteem of the centurion, or the man had been ordered to show him leniency, he was permitted to go on shore. The tiny local church celebrated his passage; he exhorted the faithful, and they overwhelmed him with their affection and concern.

As the wind had veered flatly to the west, they could not gain the open sea. The boat passed along the eastern shore of Cyprus, in the shelter of the highlands, and sailed within sight of Cilicia and Pamphylia. Paul recognized at a distance these regions which he had opened to the Gospel. Would he ever again set mortal eyes upon them?

The vessel reached the port of Myra in Lycia, where there happened to be quite a large ship for Alexandria, laden with grain and en route for Brindisi or Naples. The centurion secured accommodations on this for his entire party. Despite the south wind, the transport continued on its way, touching at Cnidus after several days of slow progress. Finally, in the lee of Crete, it plied calmer waters. But as they neared the point of the big island, the sea became more turbulent. The ship rounded Cape Salome, and arrived with difficulty at a harbour called Fair Havens, near the city of Lasaea.

Despite its name, this place afforded scant protection against the winds from the west and the southwest. The master and the owner of the vessel decided to push on to the east, as far as the port of Phoenix, where they could wait for fair weather. Paul, who was warned of danger by prophetic insight, attempted to dissuade

them: "Sirs," he said, "I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives."

The owner must have shrugged his shoulders; he knew his business. By what authority did this questionable passenger, this gaol-bird, meddle in the matter with his ill auguries? The centurion also scorned the words, which Paul undoubtedly repeated. He could have taken off his passengers at Fair Havens; but in keeping with human wisdom, he listened to the ship-owner and the captain.

As a wind had risen from the south, they weighed anchor; by tacking they kept as close as possible to the shore of Crete, with its cliffs dropping perpendicularly into the angry waters. But suddenly, as though through a gate abruptly opened, a tempest beat down from the mountains in the northeast of the island and swept across the sea. "The Euraquilo!" the sailors cried. "The Euraquilo! Where will this drive us?" The owner gave orders to take in the sails, letting the boat drift at large with the tempest, in the terror of darkness.

Paul had chosen to say, "The whole creation groaneth." Did he think of the commentary which the storm provided for these inspired words? The shouts of the sailors, the whipping of the sails, the moan and clash of the winds, the hissing foam, the shock of wave upon wave, the lashing rain—the deep was as Job had described it, like the head of an old man with rumpled hair. But throughout the turmoil he never ceased to feel the liberating presence of the Christ. Had he seen him walking across these sinister waters, he would, like Peter, have stepped forth confidently to meet him. He had already been shipwrecked three times, in sea voyages of

which we know nothing; his faith brought him full assurance that he would again escape.

The day dawned slowly, though the sun remained hidden. The low clouds speeding by seemed to toss about like the ship itself. There was no end to the circle of jagged waves, the mountains of water with their whirling chasms. Nevertheless a little island rose up. The clouds were shattered against its peaks, which were sharp as nails. On an inaccessible coast, the voracious waves were breaking.

The master recognized Cauda (today Gozzo), twenty-five miles to the south of Crete. The island raised a wall against the gale, and by running in the lee of it, they had a moment of respite. The men hauled aboard the bulky ship's boat which they had been towing at the stern. The owner was afraid that it might be carried away. They undergirded the hull with cables, fearing that the timbers might collapse—and they lowered a drag or "gear" which, by its resistance adrift, would retard their desperate flight. One of the dangers was that they might be driven towards Africa, to founder on the desert coast of Syrtis Major or Syrtis Minor.

Whenever the boat plunged into the trough of a wave, it rose so obliquely and sluggishly under its strain that it might suddenly capsize. On the third day, to gain some relief from their fatigue, the crew began casting off tables, benches, unnecessary rigging, and the sails, which had been torn by the wind and were strewn over the deck.

The hurricane continued, as though a horde of demons were at work whipping it into a frenzy. They had seen neither sun nor stars for thirteen days. They

no longer knew where they were, or where they were headed. The water had ruined a large part of their stores. Of the two hundred and sixty-six persons on board, the majority, either through sickness or lack of provisions, had eaten almost nothing since the beginning of the tempest. Their courage failed them; the men gave themselves up as lost; Paul found it difficult to keep up his own spirits—he felt that the powers of evil were besetting his path more strenuously than ever, as though they wanted to deprive him of access to the Eternal City. He prayed desperately for the souls of the living who were on the ship with him. He asked for a *sign*.

One night—the thirteenth—an angel appeared to him and comforted him, "Fear not, Paul; thou must stand before Caesar: and lo, God hath granted thee all them that sail with thee." In the morning the weather had not yet changed. The same amorphous sky, the same livid or pitch-black sea, the same inexorable gale. Nevertheless, Paul went about on deck among the cowering groups and told them of his divine security:

"Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have set sail from Crete, and have gotten this injury and loss. And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. For there stood by me this night an angel of the God whose I am, whom also I serve. . . . Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even so as it hath been spoken unto me. Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island."

As a matter of fact, on the fourteenth night towards midnight, some members of the crew detected, above the tumult of the waves, a significant noise. The drift-anchor was touching bottom—thus land was near.

They sounded: only twenty fathoms! A little further: fifteen fathoms! They trembled lest the vessel might be shattered on a reef; and they dropped four anchors from the stern. They preferred this danger to the other. But the boat was already leaking. If held here, it might be broken by the waves before dawn.

In the confusion of darkness, the sailors thought of flight. They lowered the ship's boat, under pretext of dropping anchors from the foreship. Paul was present, leaning on the gunnel. He understood their actions, and told the centurion and the soldiers, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." The boat was lowered; the soldiers, despite the cries of the sailors, cut the ropes; it fell into the sea.

At this critical juncture Paul, as was characteristic of him, assumed the rôle of a leader. A supernatural certitude invested his words with an authority which neither the owner of the vessel nor the centurion was any longer capable of wielding. This mystic looked with shrewd eyes upon the boat which they were about to lower. But his priestly grandeur crowned his practical genius and transfigured it.

The day had not yet dawned; by the light of the wind-tossed lanterns he could discern the drawn faces and shivering bodies. He went about among the men; he raised his voice, this powerful voice which confronted the tumult of the sea like the roaring of a mob:

"This day is the fourteenth day that you wait and continue fasting, having taken nothing. Wherefore I beseech you to take some food: for this is for your safety: for there shall not a hair perish from any of you."

Paul's words had both a specific meaning and a mys-

teriously symbolic application. He had in mind the welfare of the soul—the repast he urged upon them was the Communion of the Christians. He took bread, blessed it in the presence of all, broke it and was the first to eat. They all regained their courage, and ate their fill.

Without waiting for the dawn, they began throwing overboard the cargo of grain. They would have a chance of escaping shipwreck if the lightened vessel could float to shore. Finally daybreak revealed a country which they could not recognize—a deserted bay, bounded on the right by high rocky masses, and on the left by the knob of a less precipitous promontory, while the middle course was blocked by an islet.

At the far end of the bay, there was an accessible strip of beach, and it was here that the master and the owner decided to ground the vessel. They gave orders to detach the cables connecting the anchors with the stern, and to loosen the rudder, which had been made fast during the storm. Then, hoisting the foresail, they advanced towards the shore. But suddenly the keel touched a sand-bar between two eddies; the foreship stuck fast, while the stern, beaten by the waves, began breaking to pieces.

At this time the soldiers, actuated by a daemonic impulse, considered the ferocious idea of slaying all the prisoners, so that none of them might escape by swimming. The centurion, who wanted to save Paul, prevented this massacre; and "he commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves overboard, and get first to the land: and the rest, some on planks, and some on other things from the ship."

Since the wind drove them towards the shore, they

all reached land safe and sound, as Paul had promised.

Where were they? If some fisher or peasant caught sight of them, he undoubtedly came to meet the shipwrecked men. But this barbarian spoke a guttural tongue that the Hellenes and Latins understood with difficulty. Nevertheless, there was a smattering of Greek words in his Punic dialect. They learned that the country where they had landed was, as Paul had announced, an island; the island of Melita. At that time it belonged to the province of Sicily; and the centurion was pleased to learn that "the chief man of the island," Publius, had his villa not far from the place where they had come ashore.

Nevertheless, the shipwrecked band, naked and half-frozen in the rain and the icy wind, could hardly summon strength enough to make their way into the interior. The natives of the near-by villages hurried to them and took pity on them. They lit a big fire of vine-cuttings. Paul, who was always active, did not stop to warm himself like the others, but assisted the Maltese peasants and Roman soldiers in feeding the fire. He did not notice that one branch which he was about to throw into the fire held a torpid viper suddenly reawakened by the heat. The creature clung to his arm and sunk its fangs into him. Blood spouted from the wound. Paul shook off the viper into the fire and went on with his work. Who could this man be, the natives asked one another? And a soldier replied that he was a knave who was being taken to Rome for trial.

"No doubt this man is a murderer," the rustics decided, "whom, though he hath escaped from the sea, yet Justice hath not suffered to live." The natives expected to see him collapse from this snake-bite and die

in intense agony. But he showed no ill effects whatsoever. Then the good people concluded that he was a god.

Paul and his companions were accorded a very kindly reception by the "chief man of the island." Publius' father was in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul approached, laid his hands upon him, and the old man arose cured. At the news of this miracle, many other invalids, especially those sick with fevers, begged him to touch them, and to pronounce a healing word. As he relieved them, they honoured both him and his companions "with many honours" and signs of friendship.

Paul stayed on Melita, the isle of honey, for three months, until March. After so many hardships, this period of hibernation was a great comfort to him. Beneath the African sun of these highlands, he repaired his aging and exhausted body for the coming struggles. Rome was no longer far away. When departing on the Alexandrian ship that would take him to Puteoli, he sent his benediction to the hospitable island.

It still remembers him. I saw Malta, or Melita, not as it appeared to him in the rain and the bitter wind, but in the splendour of an autumn morning, on Saint Martin's Day, the anniversary of peace. Above the burning sea arose the city of La Valetta, surrounded by its imposing ramparts, thrusting up its domes, towering with a Christian magnificence in which East and West seemed to be united. I reflected how the noblest aspects in the past of this island were, in a sense, the work of Paul. It was he who planted the Cross upon its shores. He would have loved the Order of Malta, the chaste and valiant flowering of the Christian spirit, the

chivalry that bore so proudly "the helmet and shield of faith." He would have admired these ramparts, rising like an indestructible bastion against the infidel. He has left no authentic trace of his passage in Malta. He does not mention it in any of his Epistles. But everything there is eloquent of his glory.

XIX

AT ROME. THE ENCHAINED OF CHRIST

BEFORE entering Rome, around the Porta Capena Paul found himself in familiar country. The twisting lanes suggested the suburbs of an Oriental city. He passed dark stalls from which emanated the odors of spices and of heavy fried foods. Swarms of children, filthy thick-legged women wearing bands about their foreheads and dragging their sandals as they walked to the fountain with an amphora on the head, ragmen, beggars, pedlars of matches—all were Jews, and here they were at home. As they watched the prisoner go by with the soldiers, they in turn murmured that he was one of them.

He had to cross Rome to reach the camp of the Praetorian guards, which was situated near the Nomentan Way, in the northeastern part of the city. After spending two years among troops at Caesarea, he found

nothing in the camp to surprise him. He scarcely noticed the vast proportions of the courts and buildings, the handsome appearance of the men, and the high-crested helmets of the foot-soldiers. But he did pay attention to the roaring of the lions that were kept there, in an enclosure of stone, with the other wild beasts destined for the combats of the circus.

The report of the governor of Judaea, coupled with the favourable words which the centurion Julius could say of his conduct, procured him a lenient form of confinement, known as the *custodia militaris*. The prisoner was permitted to live outside the camp; he was free to go about, though always in chains and held in leash by a soldier; his guard had to keep an eye on his movements day and night.

It is probable that when he arrived he took shelter in the home of some believer. Were Prisca and Aquila still at Rome? They returned to Asia, perhaps later. Paul says nothing of them in the Epistles of his captivity. Moreover, as they resided at the other side of Rome, on the Monte Aventino, he could not have been their host.

Three days after his arrival, he invited the prominent Jews of the quarter to hear him speak. Bound as he was to a legionary of the guard, he was hardly in a position to preach in a synagogue. They came, out of curiosity, to his lodging.

He explained to them the difficulties that had arisen when the Romans had wished to restore him to liberty. The Sanhedrin, by their insistence upon the right to try his case, had forced him to appeal to Caesar. And he repeated his unwearying protestation, "*Because of the hope of Israel* I am bound with this chain." The answer of the Jews was prudent and courteous, "We neither

received letters from Judaea concerning thee, nor did any of the brethren come hither and report or speak any harm of thee."

These Jews had certainly heard of the Christian innovations, of the faith in Jesus as the Messiah. They tried to give the impression of knowing less than they did, and thus induce the apostle to instruct them without reticence. Could they be said to have set a trap for him, as accomplices of the Jews in Asia? It is probable that they were sincere in declaring that they had received no letters about him. In the early spring, when communication by sea had hardly been resumed, couriers from the Orient must have been quite rare at Rome, so that the Jews of Jerusalem had not yet had time to renew their intrigues in the attempt to destroy the man who had heretofore eluded them. It even seems on the surface that they were to leave him unmolested for the next two years; or if they were acting under cover, some powerful influence assured him a period of tranquillity.

He and the Jews of Rome agreed upon a day when he would explain his beliefs to them. Meanwhile, Paul had rented a lodging provided with one quite large room, in which he assembled the brethren as well as any Jews or Gentiles eager to know the way. The Jews came first, in quite large numbers. "From morning till evening," with assertions based on the Law, on Moses, and the prophets, he bore witness to the Kingdom of God and recited the history of Jesus. As some believed, and others remained unconvinced, they departed quarrelling among themselves. Paul, certain of his failure, dismissed them unsparingly, driving the prediction of Isaiah into these hard heads like a nail:

"Go thou unto this people and say,

By hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand;

And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive."

But he added this hopeful prophecy, "Be it known therefore unto you, that this salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: they will also hear."

How did the Gentiles around Paul "hear"? Certain passages of the Epistles give us some insight:

"The things which happened to me have fallen out rather unto the progress of the gospel; so that my bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole praetorian guard, and to all the rest; and that most of the brethren in the Lord, being confident through my bonds, are more abundantly bold to speak the word of God without fear."

Paul had only to hold up his wrists with the wounds of his shackles. This method of preaching aroused in the lukewarm a desire to propagate the faith. There had not yet been martyrs at Rome. But Paul was already creating the taste for martyrdom. If the Christians had not been persecuted, they were looked upon with distrust. In the year 57 Pomponia Graecina, the matron of an illustrious family, had been accused of "foreign superstition." She was a Christian, and the new persuasion was publicly branded as noxious. The Romans perceived that this offshoot of Judaism should be considered as a thing apart. As it excluded the multiplicity of gods to the glory of the One God, it was a menace to Caesar and the state. They also suspected Christians because of their penitent habits, which implied a silent condemnation of the ignominious pagan practices.

It is not hard to imagine Paul's repugnance for the

Rome of Nero, between 59 and 61. The emperor had brought about the assassination of his mother. The cynicism of his excesses had become monstrous. Life among the wealthy classes was like some sinister farce, ending and rebeginning, like the banquet of Trimalchio, at the moment when the servants lie sprawled among the flasks of wine and snoring at the feet of the guests, who are all asleep pell-mell. The lights are guttering; two Syrians enter the room to steal some bottles that are not yet emptied; they upset the tables; a cup falls upon the head of a servant-girl, who utters a cry. The revellers awaken and resume their drinking.

The hideousness of this society could be summed up in the image of the fish that Juvenal *saw* "fattened on the refuse of a sewer." Their cruelty surpassed their gormandizing and their other vices. One Roman lady, while examining the design of a new garment, added to her amusement by ordering slaves to be lacerated with thongs. If Suetonius is to be trusted, Nero planned to deliver living victims to an Egyptian epicure who was fond of raw flesh.

The empire was a machine for crushing men. But beneath this tyranny there lurked an unholy fear. The servility of the Senate ill disguised the patricians' hatred of this military and demagogic system, in which their lives and property were exposed to the whims of informers. Rome dragged down any of the barbarians upon whom she could lay hands. But she sensed their vague, unconquerable mass muttering in the distance.

Will Paul's letters give us some inkling of the feelings that must have weighed upon his mind in the face of this imperial orgy? Peter in his first Epistle, and John in Revelation, were to call Rome Babylon. Paul, when

writing to the Philippians, is content with an oblique reference to the prevalent corruption, "Be blameless and harmless, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life." And towards the end he gives a discreet indication of the milieu in which his apostleship was to bear fruit: "All the saints salute you, especially they that are of Caesar's household."

At this time the persecution was but a vague threat; he hoped to be acquitted by the tribunal of Caesar. He had something else to do than pass judgment upon his judges—God would take charge of that. At this period the apostle's unhappiness does not seem to have been caused primarily by the pagans. He had encountered a hostile and "jealous" clan among the believers: "But the other proclaim Christ of faction, not sincerely, thinking to raise up affliction for me in my bonds."

These conflicts were painful; otherwise he would not have mentioned them. But he would not let them disconcert him. They gave him occasion to humble his person. An admirable desire for self-effacement suggested this reflection, "What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is proclaimed; and therein I rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."

What was the origin of these pin-pricks from which he had suffered? We suspect that the Judaizers were not guiltless. It is also possible that Christians of long standing were disgruntled at the spectacle of Paul's prestige. He had enjoyed too many spiritual advantages, too many adventures, too many conquests. And he bore his chains like a crown. The wary old Romans were sur-

prised at his zeal and abruptness. He kept a group of ardent disciples around him—Timothy, Tychicus, John Mark, Luke "the beloved physician," and others whom he had brought under his influence. Perhaps the ill-disposed looked upon these men as a distinct faction in the Church that was already established and flourishing.

Despite these difficulties, the longer he stayed at Rome, the more clearly he came to realize that God's call to him and Peter had a tremendous bearing upon the future. Rome would be the head of the Christian world, as it was the head of the empire, and as Christ was the leader of his Church.

Nevertheless, he loved to think of the Oriental churches, which were founded by his efforts or by his immediate disciples. It was to their saints that the testament of his inspired doctrine was bequeathed. They had great need of being confirmed in the Way. They were exposed to innumerable errors. Foremost was the Jewish ferment, which it was impossible to eradicate. "Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers, beware of the concision; for we are the circumcision, who worship by the spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

Judaism was not merely striving to impose the Mosaic principles. Among the cultivated Jews there was a *gnosis,* a superior science of religion which combined the rabbinical traditions with Oriental theosophy and Greek ideology. We get a confused understanding of its nature from Philo as reflected in the apostle's own refutations. It taught as dogma the transmigration of souls through the heavens, whose movements would govern our destinies. An asceticism originally Essene was tending, it seems, to permeate the Christian morality. This led to

the fatal illusion that man is pure and perfect, containing the good within him, so that he need not torment himself by striving after its attainment.

This explains why Paul says so emphatically to the Christians of the East, "For by grace have ye been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." And he would offer himself as an example to his beloved Philippians, "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may apprehend that for which also I was apprehended by Christ Jesus."

He had never insisted more strongly on the essential mystery: that Christ and his Church are united as head and limbs, and that if we, the limbs, desire to possess life, we must receive it from the head, must live by it, with it, and in it.

The two Epistles to the Ephesians and the Colossians are full of this sublime "revelation." Paul's eloquence never before attained such metaphysical amplitude. He resembles the legendary paladins who, on slaying a dragon, reached into his cavern and laid hands upon an unsuspected treasure. While he battles against error, with the same stroke he brings to light truths that one would have thought inaccessible. These he readily translates into images and allegories. He sees the living rock of the structure, upheld by the cornerstone uniting the two walls (Israel and the Gentiles) to form "a holy temple in the Lord." This symbol, a reminiscence of the Temple, was particularly clear to the Jews. But the pagans, through their familiarity with the gymnasium, were better able to understand the metaphor, "The body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure

of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love."

It is the property of the mystic to proceed by way of images to the summit of the pure idea and the intellectual vision of the substance. During his hours of isolation as a prisoner, and with the full maturity of his faith, Paul was exalted in unspeakable meditation, which he reported in a language both luminous and profound, the same language as gleams through the Gospel of Saint John, though Paul does not speak of the Word. Knowing that the Colossians were troubled by Gnostic errors concerning the relation between God and the world, he explained to them the true nature of the Mediator:

"[Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; for in him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and unto him; and he is before all things, and in him all things consist."

The abyss in which he was lost was the miracle of this divine Omnipotence, consummated in the perfect weakness. To complete the grandeur in God, Christ had to humble himself, "becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name: That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

As to the manner whereby the humiliation of becom-

ing a slave and living in the flesh has increased the glory of God, Paul knew too well that he would not come into possession of such a mystery until he was freed of his "body by death." Thus he acquired a fuller awareness of his conviction, "For to me . . . to die is gain."

And nevertheless, as he confronted the Roman tribunal and weighed the alternatives of acquittal or the death-sentence, a sublime debate was waged deep within him. He confides this to the Philippians:

"Having the desire to depart and be with Christ; for it is very far better: yet to abide in the flesh is more needful for your sake, and having this confidence, I know that I shall abide, yea, and abide with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith; that your glorying may abound in Jesus Christ in me through my presence with you again."

Admirable equilibrium of mystic peace, of the peace that "surpasseth all understanding"! Whatever he might expect, the saint was in a state of happiness. In another man the desire to prolong earthly life would be wholly human: Paul makes it divine, transforming it into a sacrifice, placing before his transitory work the hope of unending good. He already saw that his judges would let him live. It was an ordeal for his desire, and his brethren had need of him. But if he were to be "offered upon the sacrifice and service" of their faith, he would rejoice; they likewise would "joy and rejoice." Meanwhile his chains would serve as an example, a source of strength and glory for all believers.

"[I] fill up on my part that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church." He suffered to hasten the completion of this immortal body, which would have its fulness

when all the chosen had joined in the splendour of the saints. He was enduring mystically a continuation of the Lord's Passion. As Christ had earned the salvation of the world by his sufferings, so Paul was using the merits of Christ to earn for his brethren an increase of fervour, grace, peace, and happiness.

Even in a tangible sense, the mystery of the Gospel received more effective authority through the fact that he had made himself "an ambassador in chains." The believers were strengthened as associates in his harsh combat; they desired to suffer with him and to suffer like him.

Besides, he not only encouraged them by his letters; he sent them messengers, who told the churches of his work at Rome and of how his affairs were developing, while they acquainted the apostle with the news of all the churches. He had dispatched Tychicus to the saints of Ephesus (or of Laodicea). For the Philippians, he reserved Timothy, who had become a servant of the Gospel like himself, and whom he looked upon as a son. "For I have no man likeminded," Paul confides to his friends, "who will care truly for your state. For they all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ."

For the present, he put his missive in the hands of Epaphroditus, who had come to Rome as a representative of the Philippians, and was the bearer of precious subsidies. The prisoner received them as "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." He always knew how to find contentment, in destitution as in abundance; but he was sensitive to the kindness of this offering, and it was a sign moreover that among the Philippians the grace was bearing fruit. Epaphroditus had been dangerously ill. God had had

pity on him, and as Paul adds naïvely, "not on him only, but on me also, that I might not have sorrow upon sorrow." Now he was about to depart again, nostalgically impatient to return to the Philippians.

Similarly, his faithful companion Aristarchus was to leave Rome and go in Paul's name to solace the Colossians, accompanied by Onesimus, the "beloved brother," that fugitive slave whose story we know from the Epistle to Philemon.

Philemon, his wife Apphia, and Archippus were Christians of Colossus, and were people of prominence, for the church met in their house. Onesimus, a slave of Philemon's, had stolen from his master, taken flight, and hidden at Rome. Through Epaphras he here met Paul, who converted him to Christianity. And on sending him back to his master, the apostle wrote the latter some lines which mark the full expansion of his saintliness:

"Wherefore, though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, yet for love's sake I rather beseech, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now a prisoner also of Christ Jesus: I beseech thee for my child, whom I have begotten in my bonds, Onesimus, who was aforetime unprofitable to thee,[1] but now is profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent back to thee in his own person, that is, my very heart: whom I would fain have kept with me, that in thy behalf he might minister unto me in the bonds of the gospel: [2] But without thy mind I would do nothing; that thy goodness should not be as of necessity, but of free will.

[1] Paul is punning on the word Onesimus, which means useful, profitable.
[2] He means: in the chains I bear in behalf of the Gospel.

"For perhaps he was therefore parted from thee for a season, that thou shouldest have him for ever; no longer as a servant, but more than a servant, a brother beloved, specially to me, but how much rather to thee, both in the flesh and in the Lord. If then thou countest me a partner, receive him as myself. But if he hath wronged thee at all; or oweth thee aught, put that to mine account;

"I Paul write it with mine own hand, I will repay it: that I say not unto thee how that thou owest to me even thine own self besides. Yes, brother, let me have joy of thee in the Lord: refresh my heart in Christ. Having confidence in thine obedience I write unto thee, knowing that thou wilt do even beyond what I say. But withal prepare me also a lodging: for I hope that through your prayers I shall be granted unto you. Epaphras, my fellowprisoner in Christ Jesus, saluteth thee; And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, my fellowworkers.

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen."

This combination of authority, delicacy, tactfulness, sportiveness, tenderness, and exalted charity makes the letter a masterpiece apart. If Paul were known to us through such pages alone, we should have a very lofty opinion of his character and his genius. And above all, he finds a solution for the relationship between master and slave. This love, if practised, would have transformed the terrors of the pagan world into a paradise. The society of the time did show some generous inclinations to alleviate conditions among the slaves. There was a law passed, in 58, requiring the prefect of police

at Rome and the provincial governors to hear the complaints of slaves who swore to acts of injustice or cruelty on the part of their masters.

In 61, possibly while Paul's trial was pending, the prefect of Rome, Pedanius Secundus, was killed by one of his slaves. In accordance with an ancient custom, all the slaves of his household were condemned to death. There were four hundred of them. Some senators were opposed to this wholesale slaughter. But the traditional attitude prevailed, which meant that the four hundred, young and old, would be given up to the gibbet or the cross. The enraged populace armed themselves with stones and firebrands to prevent the execution. Nero had to station a wall of troops along the route of the condemned.

Some Stoic philosophers went so far in theory as to deny the human inequality of the slave. They began to think it astounding that one man should be the *property* of another. Epictetus, who remained for many years the slave of Epaphroditus, a freedman of Nero, declared in the sententious manner typical of the sect, "If a man would be free, he must neither seek nor avoid those things which make him dependent upon others. Otherwise he is condemned to slavery." Seneca exhorted Lucilius to live on familiar terms with his slaves, even to the extent of taking his meals with them.

"They are slaves!—*No, they are men.* Slaves! No, friends in humble circumstances, colleagues in servitude, when you recall that you are as susceptible to fate as they. . . . The man whom you call your slave has a like origin with yourself, enjoys the same heavens, breathes, lives and dies as you do. . . . Today you are free; but tomorrow you may be a slave, with your

former slave for a master. A certain man is a slave. But perhaps he has the soul of a free man. Who is not a slave? One person is a slave to debauchery, another to ambition, a third to fear."

Nevertheless, Seneca did not propose the emancipation of the slaves. On the contrary, he concluded that since a good master has an opportunity of gaining respect, his own self-interest requires him to be just.

Saint Paul's decisions were more firm, because he had based them upon a divine reality and a principle of faith. He instructed the Galatians, "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free . . . for ye all are one man in Christ Jesus." Jesus himself had taken the form of a slave. From the moment a man is baptized, he is a brother. How would he be inferior in the eyes of God to one whom he calls his master? But this does not mean that slaves should demand their freedom:

"Wast thou called being a bondservant? care not for it: but if thou canst become free, use it rather. For he that was called in the Lord, being a bondservant, is the Lord's freedman: likewise he that was called, being free, is Christ's bondservant."

He also puts a practical interpretation upon the relations between master and servant. He wants the servant to obey "not in the way of eyeservice," but with uprightness and reverence "as unto Christ." The masters he admonishes to be kind and gentle, "And forbear threatening: knowing that both their master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him."

Before meeting Onesimus, Paul had shown great affection for another slave, that Amplias or Ampliatus

whom he mentions at the close of the Epistle to the Romans. Ampliatus—at least we have cause to believe that it was he—was buried in a chapel of the cemetery of Domitilla; it would be hard to explain how a slave was given a place beside the dead of an illustrious family, except as a way of doing honour to Saint Paul. Since becoming a prisoner, the apostle felt still nearer to those who were called "slaves." And did he not, like many of them, have shoulders scarred by the marks of the rods?

Nevertheless, his status as a captive detracted nothing from the freedom of his gospel. We might even say that during his imprisonment his consciousness of authority had increased. His messengers came and went from West to East. His words continued to traverse the nations. The more confined the power of the Spirit seemed, the greater grew the vigour of its expansion. Paul's chains, like the chains of Peter, symbolized the spiritual reign of the Church, which was all the sturdier during those centuries when the Beast was apparently constraining it, and reducing it to silence and extermination.

XX

THE MARTYR

PAUL'S two years at Rome as a *military prisoner* terminate our exact knowledge of his life. The book of the Acts goes no farther. It is not likely that the author purposely refrained from mentioning the apostle's condemnation and death, since the knowledge of these notorious facts must have immediately spread to all the Christian communities. The abrupt termination of the narrative must have been due to other causes, which escape us.

Hereafter Paul is immersed in a mist. At intervals we catch the sound of his voice. But we have difficulty in following his movements. The Epistle to the Philippians confidently announces a forthcoming visit to Macedonia. He believed in the favourable outcome of his trial. The Epistles to Timothy and to Titus would be inexplicable if he had not been actually acquitted and freed.

The first to Timothy shows him departing for Macedonia; he desires his disciple to wait for him at Ephesus, where he intends to rejoin him. In the second, he recalls that he has left Trophimus sick at Miletus. When writing to Titus, he informs us that he left him at Crete, to "set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city." Thus, after his acquittal, Paul returned to see the churches of Achaia, Macedonia, and Asia. He undertook a mission in Crete, and entrusted Titus with the task of putting his work there on a solid foundation.

As to the voyage in Spain which he had planned so resolutely, how and when could he have made it? On the authority of Clement the Roman we learn that Paul "reached the limits of the West"—and whatever the vagueness of these words, they do not apply to Rome, but rather to Spain, the extreme point which the annunciator aimed to reach before appearing before the Judge to say that all the world had heard his name. But there is nothing to reveal the time or the circumstances of his exploration.

Was it then that Paul composed or inspired the Epistle to the Hebrews? Commentators have exhausted themselves with theories about this mysterious text. It has no opening salutation, and alludes to none of Paul's companions except Timothy, of whom he says cursorily, "Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you. . . . They of Italy salute you." It does not seem as though Paul himself would have spoken thus of a man whom he loved as a son, his "own son in the faith."

The letter is essentially Pauline in its doctrine. We can recognize certain theological terms and familiar meta-

phors, "All things are in subjection under his feet. . . . [Ye] are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food. . . . For the law made nothing perfect. . . . But the just shall live by his faith."

Certain sentences and phrases have the blunt, nervous quality typical of the apostle's diction. "And apart from shedding of blood there is no remission. . . . Ye have not yet resisted unto blood. . . . It is fearful to fall into the hands of the living God." And particularly the admirable passage on the prophetic word, "For the word of God is living, and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrows."

But on the whole there is a pompous and redundant majesty here that seems alien to Paul's style. It might be likened to a page of Demosthenes expanded by Isocrates. Paul could evidently adapt his mode of expression to different audiences. None the less, we may detect a hand other than his own. The elaborate passage on the faith (chapter XI), with its lengthy enumerations of biblical examples, this plethora of evidence which the author amasses in support of a simple truth, betrays the rhetorician. The work looks as though it had been written by a disciple of Paul, or by a man who had come under his immediate influence, a Jew by birth who had been affected by the Greek schools of eloquence. Tradition has named Barnabas.

The Epistle is addressed to certain congregations at Palestine who were victims of the great disorder preceding the revolt of Judaea. Never before had the Christians of Palestine been so intensely affected by the attempt to cramp the Church beneath the Mosaic yoke. On all sides the spirit of fanaticism was raging furiously.

They would have to face a choice, either becoming complete Jews in every particular, or going into exile (which they did, as they retired to Pella for safety).

The author of the Epistle exhorts them to persevere in their faith. He suggests a parallel between the Jewish priesthood, which is imperfect and transitory, and the priesthood of Jesus Christ. Jesus is the necessary mediator, the priest in eternity. These considerations are animated by pontifical magnificence; but behind their serenity they reveal the attitude of Italy's Christians in awaiting martyrdom, "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood." We, the implication is, know what must be endured for the Kingdom of God.

The evocation of the torments suffered by the precursors of the Gospel, the prophets of the Crucified, represents something more than an oratorical commonplace: "They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, they were tempted, they were slain with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, evil entreated (of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves, and the holes of the earth."

Finally, there are certain flashing antitheses, cries of sublime detachment, which have a thoroughly Pauline accent: "For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek after the city which is to come."

No one more constantly than Paul passed through this world like a nomad, marching towards the celestial city for which he was preparing himself on earth. What human city could have met the hopes of the Christian? Jerusalem and the Temple were destined to fall; Rome, which called itself eternal, was to be three-fourths destroyed by fire.

On July 19, of the year 64, some warehouses in which oil was stored at one end of the great Circus, caught fire. Soon the centre of Rome was aflame, and it burned for six days. Of the fourteen districts of the city, ten were annihilated. Where was Paul when the news of this disaster filled the roads of the empire? Doubtless he saw in this a sign prefiguring the universal conflagration that would renew the earth and the heavens.

While waiting for this great day, he continued warring against error. He schooled the churches in ways of thinking which would enable them to avoid vain quarrels, disorder and heresy. The two Epistles to Timothy and the one to Titus reveal him as tireless in combat, always firm, even gruff at times, but with the tranquillity and poise of a spirit that was already close to the light without shadows.

Never for an instant did he relax in his opposition to the Judaizers, who would be "teachers of the law, though they understand neither what they say nor whereof they confidently affirm." These "circumcised," more than the others, are "unruly men, vain talkers and deceivers, . . . men who overthrow whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake, . . . For of these are they that creep into houses, and take captive silly women laden with sins, led away by divers lusts. . . . Not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn away from the truth."

Certain men upheld absurdities, like Hymenaeus and Philetus, whom he found it necessary to excommunicate. According to them, the final Resurrection would not take place, since it had already been morally fulfilled in baptism. Certain others forbade marriage, and insisted

upon the distinction between pure and unclean foods; they would reduce piety to physical asceticism. Or they even taught the Gospel differently from the apostle; the truth, as they spoke it, was deformed. In particular they sought personal gain; yet "the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil."

Paul had seen the aberrations that might weaken even the holiest of spiritual organisms after its growth was completed. Moreover, he foresaw their consequences. He knew that men puffed up with their own wisdom "will proceed further in ungodliness." To diminish the vices inherent in every human group, he preached two remedies: fidelity to the principles of the Gospel; a sound system of management which, though still very simple in its hierarchy, would serve as a model for the future.

The head of the churches which he had founded was the apostle himself. He would not allow any one to contest his authority, since he had received it from the Lord and from the first apostles. Occasionally he would delegate his powers to Timothy, Titus, or others, when commissioning them to visit some church. He instructed them to establish elders or bishops in each city, men of tried virtue who were attached to the holy doctrine. The elders would have the assistance of deacons and widows. Thus, the repository of the faith would be guarded, each church would be in charge of leaders who had received the Holy Ghost and could in turn transmit it to others.

Between the first and second Epistles to Timothy, the great persecution at Rome had begun. In overcautious terms, Clement of Rome allows us to perceive which enemies of the Christians had fomented it: "It is as the

result of jealousy that those who were the pillars of the Church have been persecuted and have battled unto death."

The fire at Rome had spared the region around the Porta Capena and the quarter of the Trastevere; it had broken out not far from the streets of the Jews, but had left them unharmed. This gave rise to the rumour that the Israelites had aimed to destroy Rome as a way of avenging their people in Judaea, who were aroused by the severity and excesses of the Roman governors. The angered populace was preparing to retaliate. As a way of avoiding such public reprisals, and turning this wrath against the hated Christians, the Jews spread the report that the incendiaries were the disciples of the Crucified.

Some members of Nero's court—Poppaea and certain Jewish comedians—undertook to whet the sovereign's animosity. They pictured his household as infested with Christian slaves, scribes, freedmen, and officers. All these people, who acted like the most loyal of servants, were secretly plotting horrible crimes. They had all but burned Rome; sooner or later the emperor would be their victim. How could he fail to know that the Christians "hated all mankind"? They discountenanced pleasures which were commended by nature. Witnesses at their secret meetings had disclosed unmentionable forms of indecency. And most of all, they worshipped a crucified insurrectionist. They defied the edicts against foreign superstitions. They showed scorn of the law in refusing to acknowledge the divinity of the emperors.

It had been Nero's dream to rebuild Rome. And whether or not he was guilty of prolonging the burning

of the city, he found the populace restive because of the great distress which the disaster had entailed. Accordingly, he was quick to seize this method of diverting their anger. As was characteristic of him, he made it theatrical and atrocious. Tertullian credits him with a sentence which he might well have uttered, "*Christiani non sint.* Let there be no Christians."

Did he strike them with an edict? Following arrests en masse, the accused were given over to torture. There was no trial; it was enough if some one denounced them or if they confessed themselves Christians. Even if we reduce to a few thousand the "enormous multitude" whose condemnation is related by Tacitus, Nero at first obtained the desired effect. The event was momentous. The populace thought that they were getting vengeance for their recent catastrophes by applauding the sufferings of the supposed instigators. In accordance with Roman law, as incendiaries the Christians had to be delivered to the stake or exposed to wild beasts. But it is well known what refinements of horror the sadistic play-actor delighted in inventing and staging. Hordes of sufferers were wrapped in the hides of animals and delivered to the jaws of vicious dogs in the arena. Along the pathways in the gardens of the Vatican, there were martyrs empaled upon pikes; they wore the *tunica molesta,* a garment soaked in pitch and sulphur; at night, they flamed as living torches, while Nero drove about in his quadriga or stood on the boards of a stage, his cittern in his hand, singing snatches of some tragedy. Christian girls were dragged into a theatre, where they played the parts of the Danaïdes, vowed to the horrors of Tartarus. Before strangling them, mimes violated them in public—or they were even, like Dirce, bound

to the horns of a bull, which trampled upon them, tore them among rocks, and disemboweled them.

Nevertheless, the protracted ferocity of these tortures, instead of allaying the people's hatred, finally told against Nero. Among the condemned there were too many people who were obviously innocent. Old men, youths, destitute women, though tormented beyond human endurance, preserved a smile of patience throughout their unending agonies. Their victory first astonished the curious onlookers, and then moved them to compassion. It became evident that their torture had a single purpose—to provide amusement for a monster and for others like him.

Paul was probably in the Orient when he learned of the devastation of the Roman church and the triumphant struggle of the brethren. He had written to Titus, "Give diligence to come unto me to Nicopolis: for there I have determined to winter." He had stopped at Troas, where he forgot his cloak, perhaps his only cloak, at the home of Carpus.

At Corinth, according to one very plausible tradition, he met Peter; and together the two apostles departed for Italy, with the intention of encouraging the faithful, and also aware that at Rome they would be given the "crown."

According to the apocryphal Acts of Paul—though it is difficult here to distinguish between fiction and history—the apostle rented a barn *outside of Rome,* where he resumed his preaching. He was denounced and again imprisoned. But this was no longer the *custodia militaris.* He showed himself to Timothy, laden with chains "as a malefactor." A certain Onesiphorus, who had come to Rome, found him only after a long and

difficult search. Thus Paul must have been held in strict confinement. His old friends no longer dared admit that they knew him; even the location of his gaol was uncertain. "All that are in Asia turned away from me," he says. "At my first defence no one took my part, but all forsook me."

He was not yet sure that death was imminent. He had once before been "delivered out of the mouth of the lion." He had but one certainty—"The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto his heavenly kingdom." He hopes that Timothy will hasten to arrive before winter, bringing the cloak left at Troas.

Nevertheless, he speaks as though he were giving him parting words of advice; he sees himself offering his blood as the libation of the last sacrifice; the time "to raise anchor" approached. From the depths of his prison Paul scents the breeze from the deep sea; soon he will set sail for the shores of heaven.

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day: and not only to me, but also to all them that have loved his appearing."

There is probably nothing in the Epistles more sublime than these words of an old athlete who is firmer than ever in his faith, who admits no lassitude, but will depart *because the race is won.*

Meanwhile he recalls briefly "what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra, which persecutions I endured: and out of them all the Lord delivered me." And today he endures *all,* "for the elects' sake [the

predestined], that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

He reminds his disciple of his constant wishes, asking that he use justice, charity, and lovingkindness even with those who must be rebuked and condemned. Already his voice seems to be coming from beyond the grave, from a world where peace can never again be lost.

At the same time he is preparing the exhortations that will serve for innumerable martyrs. In the Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs, the proconsul Saturninus questions the prisoner Speratus: "What do you keep in your archives?" And Speratus replies: "Our sacred books and the *Epistles of Saint Paul, a very holy man.*"

What a viaticum he brought them, before the hour of their torment! We can understand the athlete pictured on the walls of the catacombs. They were thinking of him as of an invincible fighter who had conquered through grace, and had never doubted the possibility of such a victory.

But following this Epistle, the darkness of a sombre corridor surrounds the last days of the apostle. Until the end of time, the reversals of his second trial will remain unknown. We are reduced to the Apocrypha, where the narrator is obviously inventing or transposing many details.

Patroclus, the cup-bearer of Caesar, has gone to hear Paul in the barn where he is teaching. He sits in the window of the loft, falls out, and is killed. Paul brings him back to life, places him on a beast of burden, and Patroclus departs in perfect health. The episode is an awkward replica of Eutychus' resurrection at Troas. But the sequel may contain more elements of truth.

Nero had heard that Patroclus was dead. When he saw him returning alive, he was astounded. "Who brought you to life?" "Christ Jesus," answered Patroclus, "the king of all eternity."

This disturbed Nero, who had even thought of becoming King of Jerusalem because he knew vaguely about the prophecies of the Oriental seers. "This Jesus is to reign throughout eternity and to overthrow all earthly empires!" Patroclus did not hesitate to answer, "Yes, he will overthrow all empires of the earth—and he alone will rule for all eternity."

Then Barsabas Justus of the large feet, Urion the Cappadocian, and Festus the Galatian, the first servants of Nero, exclaimed at once, "We also serve this king of eternity." Nero ordered them to be bound with chains and tormented cruelly. He dispatched a centurion to seize Paul and his auditors. When the apostle appeared before Caesar, Nero said at first sight of him, "This man is their leader," for they had all turned their eyes upon Paul. The emperor questioned him:

"Why have you come to Rome? Why do you seek for soldiers among those subject to my own command?"

Paul replied:

"Oh, Caesar, we search all inhabited regions of the world for our armies, since we have been commanded to turn away no man who would serve our king. You also, by so serving, can be saved. By prayer you can be saved. For in one day, he shall make war upon the world."

There is nothing surprising about the fact that Nero personally should have questioned Paul. By exercising the powers of a commander, the prince would automatically assume judiciary functions. Paul undoubtedly proclaimed the Coming of the Lord either to him or

to some other magistrate. When confronting pagans of great hauteur and authority, he never failed to announce the formidable fact that in time all earthly empires would perish, but God would make manifest the *one,* immutable Kingdom.

However, Nero was not in Rome when Paul appeared a second time before a Roman tribunal. Saint Clement says that Paul suffered martyrdom *under the prefects.* Rome ordinarily had but one. That year—in 67—Nero decided that there should be two. He was planning his sumptuous voyage in Achaia, and by spring he had departed. Tradition asserts, however, that Paul was executed on the twenty-ninth of *June.* It assigns the same day, though possibly at a year's interval, to the execution of Peter.

In veiled language, Jesus had announced the manner of death by which Peter would glorify him:

"When thou wast young, thou girdest thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not."

Peter, who was treated as a vagabond, did indeed "stretch forth his hands," as he was nailed head downward on the cross which he had chosen. To Paul, as a Roman citizen, a more honourable form of death was reserved. He was beheaded by the sword.

Did he, as tradition asserts, pass his last day with Peter in the dreadful dungeon of the Mamertine Prison? The gaol near the Forum seems to have served rather for political criminals—such as the accomplices of Catiline —or for prisoners of war, like Vercingetorix. But whatever the gaol in the depths of which Paul awaited the

dawn of his liberation, it could not have been less repulsive. Darkness, putrescence, the touch of hideous animals, the humidity and ooze of a sewer, the immobile posture in rags full of vermin, hands stiffened by the weight of chains, feet clamped between two bars of iron!

When the door opened and he started forth to his martyrdom, it was a lovely morning in summer. A few more hours of waiting, and he would at last be united with Christ, not merely by mystic possession, but actually facing him unendingly, as Job had hoped to do—"Yet from my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." He would no longer feel any division of the flesh between his soul and God; he would have thrown off the weight of silence. He still found it sweet to breathe the light of this world. But he already looked upon his surroundings as from a great distance.

The hard shoes of the soldiers rattled over the stones of the lively streets. Their naked swords glistened in the rising sun. Pedestrians stopped with ironical curiosity to observe the ragged old man who was being led forward, his arms behind his back. Perhaps he heard the headsman who accompanied the guard joking with his assistants. But he gave no thought to this crushing power of Rome, which a bas-relief on a triumphal arch had pictured to him as an indifferent, relentless knight whose horse rested its hoof upon the neck of the vanquished.

Even at this hour, he was in quest of souls whom he might lead to Christ. As the centurion, marching near him, looked at him with compassion, he ventured to speak of the Lord. "Believe in the living God," he said,

"for he will raise me from the dead, and all those that believe in him."

They proceeded towards the gate of Ostia, in the southwestern part of the city. On the highway there, awaiting his passage, stood a veiled woman who was obviously of gentle birth. As he approached, she turned tearful eyes upon him; and folding her hands in supplication, she cried out, "Paul, man of God, remember me before the Lord Jesus." Paul recognized Plautilla, a patrician who had fearlessly given aid to the Christians in their anguish. He said to her, in cheerful accents, "Farewell, Plautilla, daughter of eternal salvation. Lend me the veil covering thy head, that I may bind my eyes with it as with a shroud, and leave thee this evidence of my affection, in the name of Christ."

Beyond the Tiber, on the Via Ostiensis, they passed the spot where, on the right side of the road, the Emperor Constantine was later to erect the first basilica in honour of the apostle. There was a country-house here, owned by a Christian matron, Lucina. About a mile farther, they turned to the left on the road that mounted towards the plateau. If Paul considered the horizon for a moment, strange memories rose up to astonish him. This vast region, which was shut to the west by the peaks of the Sabine mountains and sloped towards the sea on the south, this peaceful bluish plain where the Tiber wound among green hills, resembled the plain of Cilicia lying on the slopes of the Taurus.

There another stream was flowing. . . . The days of his childhood emerged, then sank again into oblivion. Between the Saul of those days and the aged Paul who was going to his death, there was a wider gap than between Tarsus and Ostia.

The sun was becoming oppressive; the dust of the highway irritated his weary eyes. He advanced with courageous footsteps. He had marched so much since walking the road to Damascus! This was the last stage of his journey; he would complete it like a good veteran, with the same stride as the youthful soldiers of Caesar; and he would fall at one stroke, as though on the field of battle.

The spot in the suburbs selected for the execution was a hidden, deserted grove. Its wholesome springs had earned it the name of Aquae Salviae. The Roman authorities had undoubtedly chosen this solitary place through fear that the spectacle of Paul's martyrdom might arouse a contagious fervour among the Christians.

The guard halted *near a pine tree.* The condemned man asked the centurion for permission to meditate. He prayed standing, with outstretched arms, facing the holy city of his fathers in the East. They heard him speak *in Hebrew* to some invisible Presence. He undoubtedly reviewed his early transgressions a last time; he asked for forgiveness, though certain that it had already been granted him. He prayed further for the salvation of Israel, for the churches which he had founded, for all the other churches, and for the one Church to come.

His penalty included the flogging that customarily preceded decapitation. He once again offered to the greedy rod those shoulders which were worn and lacerated by innumerable thongs. Here, as on a stele, the record of all his campaigns was inscribed in glorious stigmata.

Then his eyes were bound with Plautilla's veil. He knelt, stretching out his neck in silence. The Roman soil eagerly drank up the libation of this liberating blood.

Unquestionably, a few faithful, pious women beheld the sacrifice from the brow of the hill. We may suppose that Lucina was among them. The sainted body was born to her villa. It rested there until 258, when it was reunited with the body of Saint Peter in the necropolis of the Appian Way. In the fourth century it was finally transferred to its place beneath the altar of the basilica dedicated to the apostle, San Paolo Fuori le Mura.

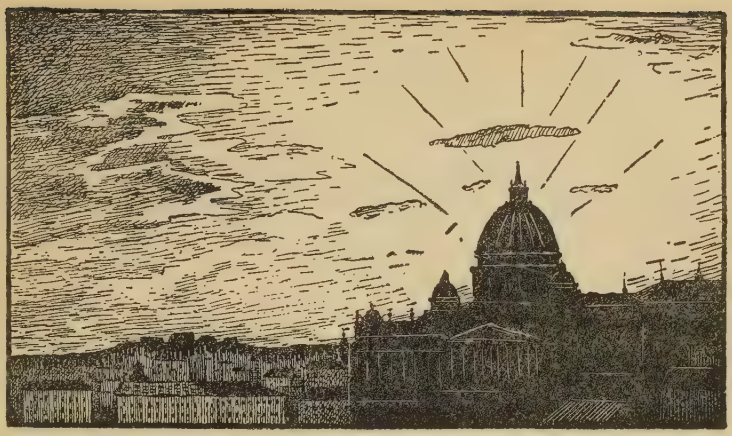
One day in summer, I retraced the path of his martyrdom from here to the vale of the three fountains. I returned in autumn in a mood of great hopefulness. The country preserved a suggestion of its former savagery. The lines of the landscape must have altered but little. To the right, there are a few farms scattered through a sloping forest of pine; a reddish-brown tower and the spur of a green hill emerge; while the sluggish Tiber, sinuous as the Cydnus, still makes its way down to the vast plain, in response to the call of the sea. At the foot of the road, beyond two stone posts, a silent avenue cuts through groves of eucalyptus and oleander.

There is a group of three chapels in the vale. The one commemorating the fountains, which are now walled in, would hardly have pleased Paul such as we know him. Three cenotaphs, with rounded frontals of black marble, are inanely funereal in character. In the centre of the stonework there is a vast pagan mosaic representing the four seasons. A fence in one corner encloses the

fragment of a legendary column where the executioner is supposed to have rested the martyr's head before striking.

But it is easy to get free of all this and forget the false setting. Both the chapel and the grove are still redolent of that meditative spirit which brings us into the presence of the Eternal. I can understand the Trappists for establishing their monastery near by. They have done more than make a swampy, fever-ridden site hygienic; they render the divine intimacy of the place more liturgical. To Paul the anchorite, this refuge is acceptable. We discover here the contemplative man who modelled doctrines and acts after his vision of the hidden God. He is, accordingly, the sword-bearer whom tradition consecrates.

Paul is always represented as gripping the handle of a sword with its point turned towards the ground. The sword was the means of his punishment; it was also the symbol of his words, which were "sharper than any two-edged sword." Alone with him, I have prayed long for the coming of the time when the desire to be touched by this sword grows great within me, when this sword has pierced my very joints and marrows, plunging into the secret recesses "of the heart and soul." For the rare truth which he teaches, and which is summed up in his martyrdom, is this: If we are to live in Christ, we must forsake ourselves and die with him.



XXI

THE FIGURE OF SAINT PAUL

THE MAN AND THE SAINT

THE vicissitudes of his career—in so far as it is known to us—are grouped like the typical scenes of a church window.

Saul guarding the cloaks of the stoners, Saul overwhelmed on the road, Paul striking the magician Elymas with blindness, Paul and Barnabas addressing the priest who has brought them victims, Paul on the hill of the Areopagus, Paul before the Fortress Antonia or in the hall of the Sanhedrin, Paul shaking off the viper into the fire, even Paul kneeling *near the pine tree* beneath the axe of the headsman—these are images which cannot be confused with any others.

But if we try to fill the centre of this church window with a portrait revealing the essence of his profound life, we must admit in advance that we are baffled by

the grandeur and complex unity of a figure without parallel. "The future will never see another Saint Paul," the most distinguished of his commentators, Saint John Chrysostom, has said. All the admirable men who, like him, became both apostles and doctors—an Augustine, a Bernard, a Dominic—seem in comparison like imperfect reproductions of an original too intense for copying.

His features must epitomize such multiplicity and distinction of character that no plastic representation has ever been able to encompass the whole.

The second-century medallion, on which he is facing Saint Peter, gives but a traditional mask: the curving nose, the bare forehead, and the prominent eyes express the tension of activity, but not the mystical meditation.

The sculpture of Saint Paul on one of the towers of the Cathedral at Reims sublimates the prophetic majesty and superhuman calm of the seer. The gaze of the empty eyes seems turned within, towards something motionless. The statue omits his vehemence and his exalted charity.

A church window of the thirteenth century, at Bourges, represents a Paul who is painfully tender and is drunken with the ravishment of the Mystery. Let us not go here to find the irresistible fire of the apostle.

Around 1468 a Fleming, Hugo Van der Goës, made a wood carving which succeeds in figuring two aspects of Paul's features. The left side of the face indicates gruffness and austerity; the right side, due to the turn of the eyes and the set of the muscles, is softer, with an element of compassion; and the two expressions are harmonized by the firmness of the lips.

Since the Renaissance most artists (except for a

radiant portrait by Veronese) have darkened the splendour of their subject. Raphael, Rembrandt, and even El Greco have imagined a Paul who is supercilious, unreceptive, and bitter. Dürer has attributed to him the wild eyes of an arrant heretic. As to the moderns, if we except the fresco by Maurice Denis at Geneva, they have added nothing to our insight.

While the imagination may conceive of Peter and John as embodying a simple idea, like the penitent or the contemplative, Paul disconcerts us by the mobility of his characteristics. One can always say, "This is not Paul," when it is very emphatically Paul. Saul the persecutor bears no resemblance whatsoever to Paul in ecstasy. The Paul of the Epistle to the Galatians is far removed from the Paul of the Epistles to Timothy.

And nevertheless we do recognize them as the same, despite the transfiguration of the saint. One trait dominates all others—the impassioned violence, not impulsive but dogmatic, guided by the principles of his faith. He believes; and he insists that others should believe like him and live like him, humbling themselves before the truth. His temperamentalism is not the result of his faith—but his faith turned his innate potentialities to purposes of its own.

Even his faults have served divine ends; the quickness of his impressions exposed him to incontinence; his intense moodiness would tempt him to meet opposition with summary abruptness; his virile energy could have served carnal appetites; the strength of his convictions prepared him for fanaticism; the subtlety of his dialectic was the making of a sophist.

But, being directed towards righteous ends, his need of movement and his promptness in action has-

tened the march of the Gospel. Wherever necessary, his resolution and abruptness sundered the bonds of the old Law. His indomitable faith gave direction to the hesitant, and maintained unity among those whose frailty exposed them to discord. His adaptability enabled him to adjust his means of persuasion to the particular people whom he was converting, or to the errors he wished to combat. His infirmities helped him to remain humble; he spoke of sin as a man who had felt its harsh conflict in his own flesh.

Above all, Paul was endowed with magnificent willpower. He was born with a genius for commanding. Had he remained a Jew, he would have become one of those desperate heroes who, in working to restore Israel, precipitated its national ruin.

He had the perception and bearing of a leader, the ability to see what should be done, and to convince others that it was both necessary and possible. He taught by example; he displayed hands toughened by labour. He had earned the right to say that hunger, the rod, and the perils of the seas and highways were of no moment. With the assistance of God, he had passed through all this. He could admonish others to *do as he had done.*

His valour confounds our deficiencies. What adventurer would dare compare himself with the apostle in boldness! His courage had the *spirit of triumph* as its incentive. He saw the crown at the end of his course. But instead of running in vain, he aimed at the infallible goal. He toiled solely for the glory of Christ. Whence his unheard-of patience, the patience of those who never weary of hoping. Prodigy of prodigies, in him, the most impatient of men!

The characteristic thing about Paul is that his will-

power is backed by a keen and subtle intelligence. More than a Socrates or a Seneca, he looks within himself. "For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing. . . . For the good which I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I practise."

A great analyst, without the slightest thought of being such. He never examines the inner world through curiosity or pride. He matches his misery with the perfection of the divine; he surveys his conscience in the light of the faith. Thus he suddenly perceives the core of his weaknesses and the source of his virtues.

But Paul is less an analyst than a logician. He must group his ideas about a principle; the knot is sometimes so complex that one cannot untangle it without difficulty. As for carefully turned transitions, balanced periods, and the art of cutting up an idea into pieces—he leaves such matters to the disciples of the rhetoricians. His reasoning is intuitive; in speaking he follows the abrupt and deformed Jewish method, leaping from his premises to unexpected conclusions. If he employs Hellenic forms of disputation—such as the debate with an imaginary opponent, who brings up an objection purely that the speaker may have an opportunity to answer it —this is not due to oratorical preening. If he dramatizes his arguments, he is not play-acting. He often sketches the outline of a truth and then neglects to complete his explanation. He is in such haste to express something else. His logic is not taken as an end in itself; he wants to convince, to admonish, to bring a change of heart, to turn his auditors towards God.

Paul is a *mystical* logician. This was true of him even before his conversion. He testified against Stephen to the Hellenist Jews, exactly as he later testified in the

churches against the Judaizers. He defended the synagogue with all the vehemence of an intractable love.

In him God chose one of the most impassioned men that ever trod the earth. At the outset, his intensity was deceived in its purpose. Under the expansion and enlightenment of the Spirit, his power of love showed how greatly a man could change at one stroke, following the redemption of Christ.

The saintly aspect of Paul is all the more exceptional because the road to sanctity seemed closed to him by his impetuous egotism. The sanctified man no longer lives in himself or for himself; he subjects and adjusts his entire life to the life of his God. The miracle in Paul is that he could say without falsehood, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Yet he was always himself, always Paul, with the miseries and the nobility proper to mankind. In becoming the bondsman of Christ, he gained in power and freedom—he was more himself.

Instead of ruling over some small Jewish clan, he governed Orient and Occident by his counsel; he gave support to a discipline that was destined to spread throughout the world. He despised the science of the rabbis and the profane disputations of philosophers. But the knowledge which came to him by revelation or from the apostles placed before him the treasures of incomprehensible wisdom.

At first he loved, in a narrow sense, his brethren in Israel. But his charity came to embrace the souls of both believers and infidels; all that could be loved, he loved in God.

He wielded no mere transitory powers; he was not confined to violence and destruction. God entrusted him with a measure of the divine omnipotence. He cast out

devils, healed the sick, brought back the dead to life.

Chains and prison walls shut him from the world of the living to no avail. His words were freer and more effective than before. He had known only earthly pleasures and human justice. And now he was exalted to the third heaven. He awaited the triumph of eternal Justice and the plenitude of an inconceivable happiness.

These privileges were not Paul's alone. All others could, like him, be heir to the Father's Kingdom if they chose to enter it by baptism. Far from laying claim to an exclusive possession of the Lord, Paul wanted all men to be saved. He judged himself highly unworthy, the last of the apostles, "one born out of due time," the first of the sinners. He vaunted himself only in so far as he had received innumerable blows and insults. In this particular he was sure of resembling his model.

But coexistent with this humility, there is an imperious sense of his mission. Since Christ and he are one, he could dogmatize in Christ's name, putting himself forward as an example, and developing the full amplitude of his genius.

His acts and teachings reconcile qualities that are discrepant, and even seem mutually antagonistic: harshness and lovingkindness, dignity and abasement, irony and unction, blasting decisiveness and submission; contemplative loftiness and practicality; loyalty to traditional principles and zeal for the future. This great intellectualist is the most charitable of missionaries; this Jew is the most universal of theologians.

When Paul writes to Philemon in behalf of the runaway Onesimus, he is, from the human standpoint, the perfect type of goodness. When Paul weighs *his own* reasons for dying, against those stronger considerations

which command him to continue living *for his brethren,* he is, from the supernatural standpoint, the perfect type of Christian.

What a man and a thorough saint can be, we find in Paul more absolutely than in any other figure. It would be absurd to ask which of his qualities were present to a less perfect degree, for they were all apportioned with marvellous equilibrium. And however magnificent they were, he remains close to us; his original human properties subsist, transformed into virtues; by reason of his infirmities, the saint is our brother; none of his personal qualities are effaced; he helps us to observe how those who are chosen, glorified, transformed according to the image of Christ, still retain the features of their former life.

THE DOCTOR OF THE NATIONS

His theology is stupendous; no commentator can extract all its treasures. Perhaps the most astounding thing about his doctrine is its precision and firmness, which rule out the hypothesis that it was of fluctuant formation or was composed of disparate elements.

It is based on the dogma of original sin, a conception which he derived from the Jewish theodicy of the Old Testament. The mystery of the offence, tangible in its consequences, would suffice to explain the necessity of the Redemption. All men are but one flesh; they transmit from one to another the tendency towards evil which they have inherited from Adam—though he was, in more senses than one, the prefiguration of the Christ "to come."

Mankind possessed no means of giving satisfaction; a propitiator was required. God alone could make it possible for his creatures to again become his likeness. To do this, he re-establishes communion with man through the Incarnation. Christ has *reconciled* all. But in order to rescue slaves, he himself took the form of a slave, and effaced himself to the point of the most ignominious death. This humiliation was announced by the prophets, verified in the human history of Jesus, and continued in his disciples. He was resurrected that we might be resurrected with him. He did not intend merely to give evidence of his power; he wanted mankind to recover eternal life in him and through him. This life is a pure gift; it is called beatitude; it is also called grace; it is the truth, emanating as the knowledge, power, and will to do good.

Even without Paul, we should be assured of acquiring salvation. All that he teaches us we should learn from the Gospel and the teaching of the Church. But he makes marvellous contributions to our understanding of these essential conquests; he has the speech of the inspired genius:

"For the gifts and the calling of God are without repentance."

"For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace, and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, even Jesus Christ."

When he looks upon the Church as a body with Christ as its head, he is stating more than a metaphor; he is giving tangibility to a supernatural fact that is truer than the laws of gravitation. For it is indeed from

Christ, as from the head, that all the life-giving fulness descends into the members. As Saint Thomas has written:

"He is the head of the blessed, who are joined with him in glory; of the saints who are joined with him by love; of the sinners who still cling to him through faith, although they have love no longer; of the faithless who can be joined in accordance with divine predestination; and lastly of all those who could be joined with him, but will never actually be so, such as the faithless who are still alive in this world and are not predestined."

Predestination! Paul confronts this mystery compassionately, but with unswerving calm—as one might gaze without dizziness into the chasm of a starry night. He knows that God is just; how doubt it, since God is God? The Creator of the soul desires the salvation of all. Man, enslaved by flesh, receives from the Spirit freedom in faith and love. Why are some, without apparent merit, granted these prerogatives? Why are the others disinherited? The clay cannot question the potter, if he makes of it a "vessel unto dishonour." Paul thinks of the obdurate Jews; is it God that causes them to remain in darkness? They repulse the light, they scorn it, their one desire is to destroy it, and yet it will come upon them. As to the infidels, if they do not have even the Law, they will be judged without the Law; they are their own law, possessing that natural clarity which illumines all mankind.

But Paul sees three phases in the blessed career of the righteous. They are predestined by divine election, justified by their own faith and works and by the faith and works of their brethren, and they will finally be glorified. They could not enter this glory without being

united to the mystical body of the universal church, without the communion of the saints, without the virtue of the sacraments and the rites.

When the apostle strives to complete "that which is lacking of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church," he does not believe that he is simply enduring what Christ would have suffered in his place; he holds that in suffering like his Master, he allows the efficacy of these merits to accrue to the Church. By such mystical union the power of the redemptive work is amplified. All these dogmas, as pronounced by Paul, take on the firm accents of authority, especially as they are rooted in his experiences and in the human or divine facts which he himself has verified.

But for the modern world, such aspects of truth are almost defunct. In the heretical or neo-pagan philosophies, the idea of the Fall has yielded to the most fallacious of principles, the belief that man is innately good. Thus the Redeemer becomes useless. The doctrine of predestination has been distorted into a kind of fatalism that leaves the soul indifferent to its essential future. The conflict between flesh and spirit has been simplified, the flesh being made sovereign and the function of the spirit being to serve it and deny itself. Instead of the communion of the saints, they have reverted to a conception of wholly material solidarity, such as the agglomeration of atoms brought together despite themselves and ignorant of both desires and identity. The frightful word *bloc* represents the metaphysics of our contemporaries.

At this hour, more than ever before, Paul is the doctor *of the Gentiles*. The nations must come to him to learn

again the elements of salvation. He would explain that the wages of sin is death; and he would show what sicknesses are causing destruction.

The morality implicit in his theology would furnish the one way of cure. In telling men to live in Christ and through Christ, he teaches them the epitome of strength, happiness, and perfection. He does not set up an example for anchorites alone; his Christianity is *social.* He has said the loftiest and most reasonable things of marriage. In his eyes, the love of husband and wife parallels the mystery of Christ's union with his Church; the husband must love his wife "even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it." But the wife must be submissive to her husband, as she obeys "the Lord." Like Christ, he conceives of marriage as indissoluble and holy. But in proving the sanctity of this institution, he discovers new reasons which would not have been perceived without him.

In the relation between masters and servants, he insists that the former be kind and scrupulously just, and that the latter should always be willing, as though "doing service . . . unto the Lord, and not unto men."

Concerning the temporal authorities, he holds: "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers: for there is no power but of God. . . . Therefore he that resisteth the power, withstandeth the ordinance of God."

He exhorts every man to work lest he be a burden to his neighbours; he counsels giving to the poor. He looked upon the division of labour, the ordering of one's life, and the maintenance of dignity as necessary rules, even from the supernatural standpoint.

He places above all else the two virtues of humility

and *love,* which the pagan world ignored. The magnificent poetry of the hymn in which Paul has celebrated the virtue of love will possibly have little charm for the ears of our self-satisfied philanthropists and altruists. As old and well-known as it is, it yet preserves its divine freshness, like something improvised within the gates of Paradise:

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.

"Love suffereth long, and is kind: love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not its own, is not provoked, taketh not account of evil; rejoiceth not in unrighteousness, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

"Love never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall be done away; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall be done away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part: but when that which is perfect is come, that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I felt as a child, I thought as a child: now that I am become a man, I have put away childish things. For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I have been known. But now abideth faith, hope,

love, these three; and the greatest of these is love."

The admirable thing about such a passage is that it shows the boundlessness of the zeal for God. And why does Paul surround love with an immortal diadem, as though he were seeing here the Mother of Christ? Love is the universal principle. It alone marks the unity between God and the world—not the blind unity of the pantheistic dream, but a free and voluntary unity that will never exhaust its fulness, since the created will forever know itself created in the bosom of the Father of light.

Meanwhile, man and the creation live with but one desire: to attain this unity, to be "delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." Nature groaneth—it is in the pangs of birth. We, who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, groan within ourselves, under the law of our mortal bodies, while awaiting the redemption.

Sin has darkened the world; it even burdens animals and matter with the sadness of disorder. But when the Lord Jesus appears "from heaven with the angels of his power, in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus," Death the enemy will finally be destroyed. The splendour investing the souls and bodies of the chosen will be reflected in the new skies and upon the hallowed earth. And God will be all in all.

Paul is the prophet of the ultimate unity. The expectation of the great day persists in him; it is the rock-bottom of his wishes, even when he appears certain of not witnessing the Advent. He knows that, beyond death, he will soon be with Christ. But his own salvation is not enough for him. He desires the conversion of

Israel, the coming of the Judge, the end of iniquities, and the consummation of peace.

He is the man of hope; he has not taught hope theoretically. When treated as a false brother, dishonoured, flogged, stoned, enchained, he never ceases to hope and to sow hope with fiery hands. What importance could tribulation have for him, in comparison to the promised glory? He gave his blood as evidence of his hopes. Pascal has asserted, "I am willing to believe those stories which witnesses have died to attest." And if one cannot wholly admit this argument, since heresies and false religions have had their martyrs, Paul presents himself as witness of the resurrected Christ, of the Christ whom the apostles had seen before him, whose wounds had been felt by Thomas, whose voice he himself had heard and whose *human* features he had beheld. The proof of Paul's testimony is that his faith has changed the world.

It has changed it but in part. Jesus has predicted that the powers of death will never prevail against his Church, and that his Church will not prevail against them until his own return. There will be hours—he has foretold them—when the faith declines so ominously that hesitant Christians will ask themselves how Christ could possibly have the last word. They will then reread the Epistle to the Romans. They will better understand that the promise of loyalty was not for Abraham alone, but for us, and for them.

Paul will be the clarion of our highest hopes. Until the end of time, all through the night and day if necessary, the good soldier of Christ will hurry along the streets of the camp, sounding the alarm and the attack. He will awaken new eagerness in the hearts of the brave, he will rally the wounded and the weak. He will even

reanimate the dead for this combat wherein defeat is impossible. But by an unutterable miracle, this clarion of war will have the accents of humility and angelic sweetness. He will sing the sovereignty of love, and of unending peace.

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